

TOTAL!

February 1992

Issue 2

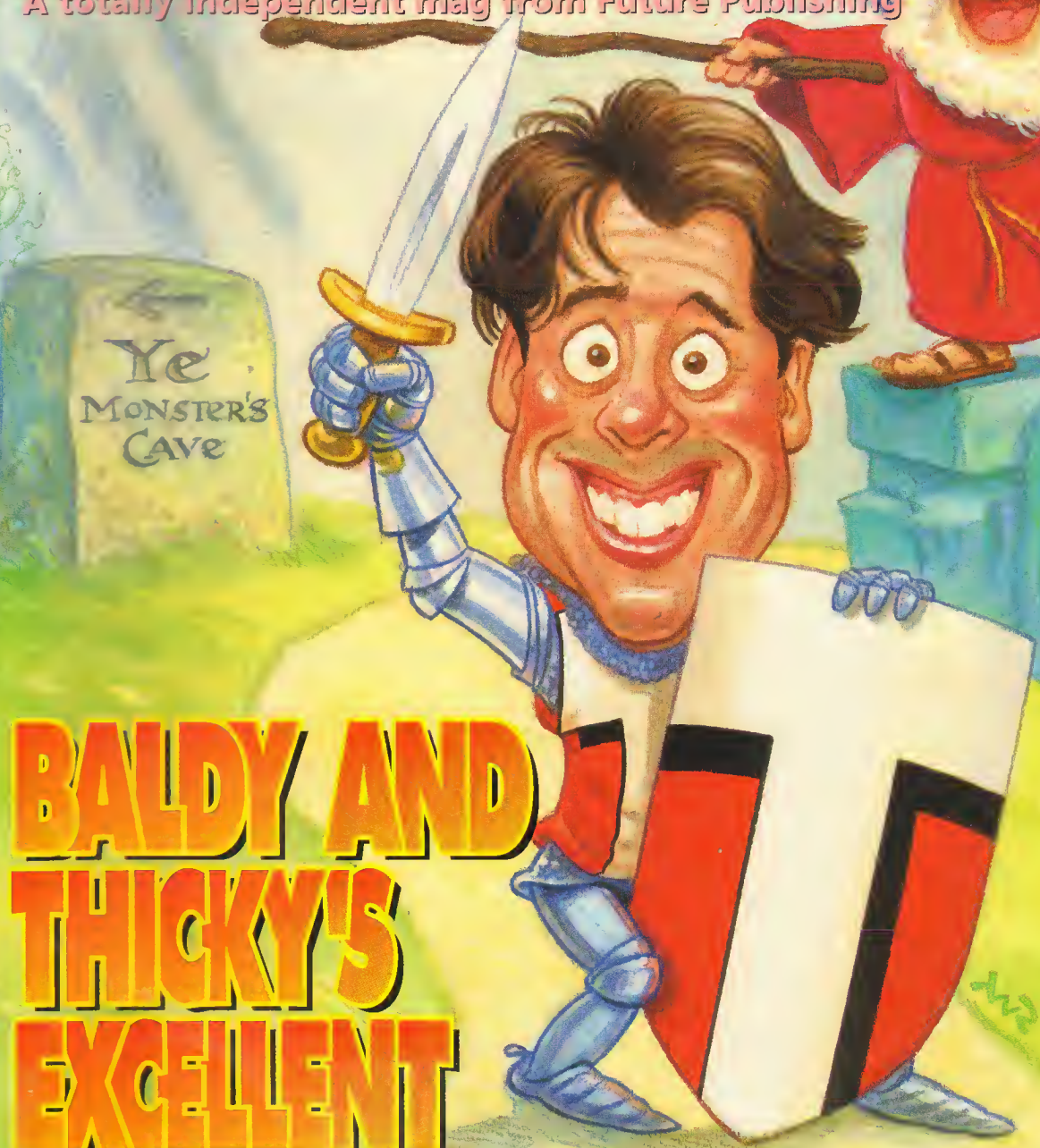
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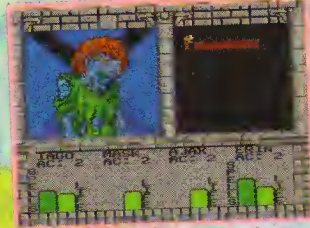
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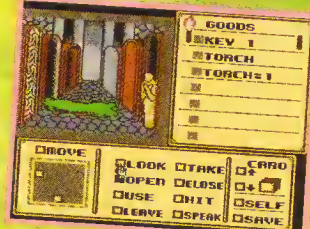
Zelda



Zelda 2 - The Adventure Of Link



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YOWZER! Win a Miracle keyboard! See page 16!

6



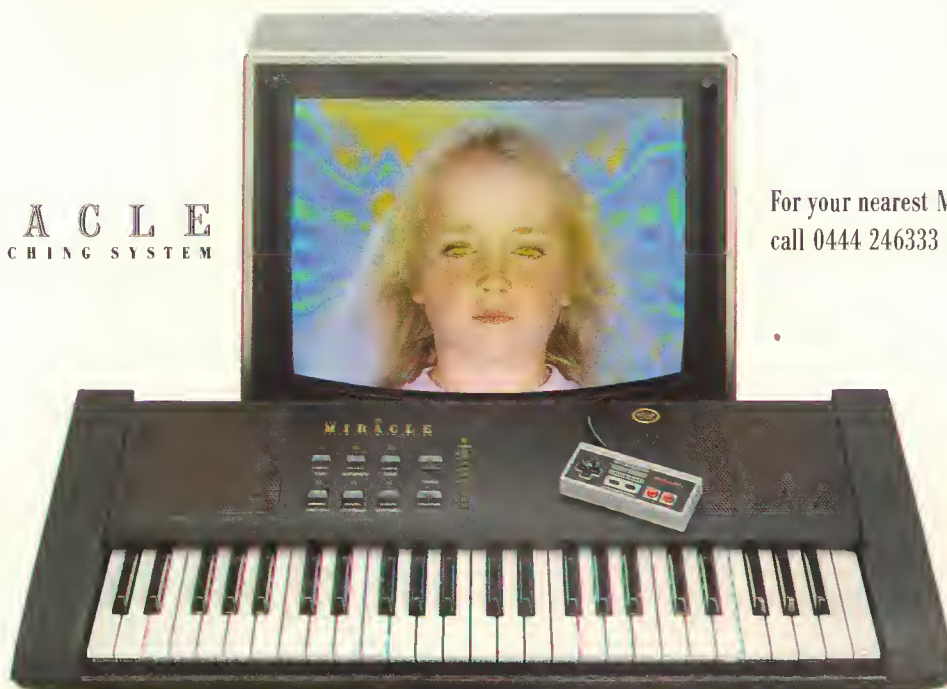
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TOTAL!

100% FOR NINTENDO PLAYERS

February 1992
Issue 2

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You got questions? We got answers. They might not be the right ones but heck, we'll do our best.

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What's squarish, greyish and stomps all over that awful, tacky black console-thing in a big, big way? No, not a breeze block, but the all-singing all-dancing Super NES. Read awl abaaat it!

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TOTAL is selling like hot cakes. Unless you want to be horribly disappointed each month subscribe now. And you'll save a bit of dosh too.

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Unless we all get run over by a truck we'll be bringing you even more Nintendo-type delights next month. What will we have? Take a look for yourselves.



With the launch of the Super NES only weeks away, we take a closer look at this new hardware on page 12.



The star of the show this month is Low G man on the NES. Turn to page 44 for the full low (G) down!



Look it's the Pet Shop Dweebs. You too can look this silly - turn to page 28!

Oh come ON! Turn the blinkin' page. This contents stuff is BORING!



Roll those credits! Again!

'Cripes, there's a lot of work involved in this TOTAL pamphlet!' you've probably said. And you'd be right (well, more so than if you had said 'Gosh! This TOTAL magazine resembles my invisible friend Clinton the bouncy, burrowing giraffe!' Which would mean you were completely wrong and mentally, well... Different. Anyway, all the hard work was done by the folk below.

Editorial (Keyboard-bashers)

All the thousands of words (some of which are pretty darn long) have been written by:

- Number 1 Steve 'Baldy' Jarratt
- Number 2 Andy 'Thicky' Dyer

Art (Mouse-pushers)

Complicated colourful headings and lay-outy stuff quickly done by:

- Number 1 Wayne 'Baghead' Allen
- Number 2 Vicky 'Victor' Mitchard

Illustrations (Picture peeps)

Drawings and photos were done by:

- Cover Mike 'Groucho' Roberts
- Characters Er, Mike 'Again' Roberts
- Photography Ashton 'Flashton' James
- Stuart 'Big Fish' Whale
- Jon 'Fishy' Fisher

Contributors

Although they'd like you to believe otherwise, not all of the writing, arty stuff was done by the four gimps at the top. They also had help from: Stuart Campbell, Neil West, Tim Smith, Lam Tang, Paula Mabe and Steve Dent.

Linotronic operators

Great big metal things with deadly chemicals and spiffy big lasers inside, told what to do by:

- Number 1 Jerome 'Where's' Clough
- Number 2 Simon 'That' Windsor
- Number 3 Chris 'eps' Stocker

Very important people

Walking into the office and looking important whilst shouting and waving their arms about by:

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- Greg 'Lofty' Ingham

Circulation director

- Sue 'Who?' Hartley

Production manager

- Judith 'Hide!' Middleton

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Helio and get well soon to:

Russell Asker. Best wishes from the TOTAL team.



LETTERS

You wouldn't believe the response we've had to our plea for letters. And although we can't possibly print all the ones we receive, we are hugely grateful. Keep sending 'em to: **TOTAL! 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.**



Hurrah! Look at this Thicky. All these luvverly people want us to answer their questions!

Huh! Why's he so blinkin' jolly all of a sudden. I want to go home. Can't we do this next year or something?



Dear Total,

Please tell me what the thing that unclips under my NES is and what it's there for?

Adam Robinson
Stratford Upon Avon

Dear Adam,

Erm, well, you can get a special adapter so you can plug all your kitchen appliances into it. Then you can do your washing, make the tea, even make a few rounds of toast all without getting out of bed. **THICKY**

Sorry about my geek of a colleague Adam. That bit of plastic is actually a protective cover. Underneath you'll find another, more permanent, protective cover. If you break that off there's a funny expansion port type of thing underneath. It's all a little bit odd really as there aren't actually any add-ons to plug into it. Although having said that, the Japanese NES deck - called the Famicom - had a disk drive that could be plugged in allowing you to load games from disk. This gadget was never released over here, so... Erm... To be honest I don't have a clue. You can plug all sorts of things into an expansion port, but since we haven't seen anything by now, I doubt that we ever will. **STEVE**

Dear Total,

I have recently brought a Nintendo and on the plastic flap covering the cartridge port it says 'NES Version' but on my friend's Nintendo it says 'Mattell Version', please explain.

Also why do you review games that have been out for a while? Most magazines just review the new releases!

Nino Cavallino
Oldham

Dear Nino,

When the NES first arrived in Britain, the responsibility of distributing it was given to an American company called Mattell. That's no longer the case so newer NESs are labelled NES Version. The name is the only real difference.

We review older games for the benefit of new NES owners who won't have seen them before - just 'cos they're old doesn't mean that they aren't worth buying. And remember, if you've seen an older game that you wanted to buy but didn't know how good it was, why not write in and ask us to review it for you? That's what we're here for (well, me anyway). **STEVE**

Dear Total,

Your mag is utterly brill' and is the best thing since Tetris. I have a Game Boy and a Lynx. Recently my Game Boy got involved in a fight with a Lynx. The Lynx reckons that the Atari 2600 was better than the NES!

Of course the Game Boy won the argument but came out with a few bruises. There are a number of scratches on the plastic screen and it's driving me mad. Is there somewhere I can send my Game Boy to get its screen replaced? I don't care how much it costs.

Chris Bennett
Tyne and Wear

PS Is it true that in the States there's such a thing as a colour adapter for the Game Boy, if so how much?

Dear Chris,

Your Game Boy was right. The Atari was little more than a shoebox with a plug. You can send the poor little mite to the following address to get him repaired (but I'd write off for a quote first): Bandai UK Ltd, PO Box 104, Fareham, Hants, PO16 8UR.

It's funny you should ask about a colour adapter - there's no such thing, but a colour Game Boy might be on the way (see page 8). **ANDY**

Dear Misery Guts,

I have just bought your magazine and I think it is cool, groovy, mega etc, but I have a few things to say about the reviews.

1 There should be a separate overall percentage for both the one and the two-player versions of the games you review.

2 Both you and Thicky Dyer should give your overall percentage at the end.

Also it would be good to have lots more news, previews and competitions. You should also give away free gifts with the magazine and we should be able to buy stuff like TOTAL sweatshirts and binders to keep my collection of TOTAL magazines in. I would also like to see loads and loads coupons so I can get money off games.

Keep up the good work!

Robert Arden
Chester

Dear Robert,

1 We feel that one overall rating is less confusing than breaking it down into lots of bits. This is why, whenever a two-player game is particularly bad or good, we mention it in the ratings box text or in the Good Points 'n' Bad Points.

2 During TOTAL's creation we looked at how other mags rated games and came to the conclusion that having several people's point of view on a game is horribly confusing. Yes, sometimes a game might appeal to one person and really annoy another, and when this occurs we mention it in the text. But what if one person said 'this is fab' and another said 'this is awful'? Where would that leave you, the buyer? And what's more, what rating should we give it? No, we tend to both play the games then if one player is really frustrated by any one aspect of it we'll tell you about it. We're as careful about our reviews as possible and come to a mutually-agreed rating for each and every game. After all, if we get it wrong, it's your money that's at stake.

Hmm... Binders 'n' sweatshirts, eh? We'll just have to see what issue 3 brings forth. **STEVE**

Dear Steve and Andy,

Well done on a first class read. It's about time us Nintendo fans had our own magazine.

I'm eagerly awaiting the release of the Super NES and would like to ask a few questions about it.

- 1. Will there be a decent football game for it?
- 2. Will there be plenty of software back-up and what sort of price will they be?

Mark Lee
Acomb, York

Dear Mark,

1. Well, you're jumping the gun a little bit since the Super NES isn't even here. However, the news for Japan is that there are already two soccer games available: Pro Soccer (a version of Kick Off which fails miserably) and Super Formation Soccer (which uses Mode 7 to show a 3D view of the pitch and is simply wonderful). **STEVE**

2. Yes, there'll be loads of games, costing no less than 20p and not more than £500. **THICKY**
In fact between £40 and £50 would be a safe bet. **STEVE**

Dear Andy and Steve,

After reading your wonderful magazine I have decided to write you a poem about the Nintendo and some of the games that I have. Here is the poem about my Nintendo:

The Nintendo is the best thing that's ever happened to me;
I've got Super Mario Brothers one and three.
I have not completed any of them yet,
But my sister Sue says 'Its no sweat'.
I also have wonderful Paper Boy
Which I think is the real McCoy
I've also got Duck Hunt and Gum Shoe,

Which when I can't complete I start to go blue.
My sister Sue has just read your mag,
And her Raccoon tail is starting to wag!

James Garrett
Cardiff

Dear James,
I've composed a little poem of my own:

Here's my verse,
I did it quite quick.
To tell you that Andy's,
quite horribly **THICK!**
STEVE

Dear Steve and Andy,

I wish to make a complaint. In issue one, page 43, you were giving the instructions for the Total Gameplayer Championships 1992. Steve made it sound as if a boy was definitely going to win by saying, 'Wow this guy can obviously play games! If he can write as well as I can get rid of Thicky! Fab - O - brill!'

I am a 14-year-old girl. I own a Nintendo NES and a Game Boy. I'm sure I speak on behalf of hundreds if not thousands of girls who are also Nintendo fans, who are fed up with people (especially boys) treating us girls as second best when a lot of us could run rings around you boys. I'm not saying a girl will definitely win but we stand just as much chance as the boys so please try and realise this point. I'm sure that Nintendo didn't have just boys in mind while making the NES or Game Boy (despite the name) so can you two - and the production team at

TOTAL - also bear us girls in mind whilst writing the mag. Other than that I think TOTAL is the best Nintendo Game Boy magazine ever!

Julie Hayward
Ilford, Essex

Dear Julie,

It's a fair cop! We wuz out of order and you spotted it. It must be said that in the past the vast majority of game players have been boys but to be honest, we've been overwhelmed by the massive response we've had from female readers - and a good thing too.

Anyway, needless to say, we'll always try to stay neutral on boy vs girl front. Still, having said that, our new art girlie Vicky is an appalling games play... THWACK! Ouch! **THICKY**

Dear Thicky and Steve,

I have a song about your magazine:

Hit it!
TOTAL is 50% NES
This half would pass any test
So go and buy, it's in the shop
Doesn't this song make you bop
The other half is a melody
This half will give you joy
Don't treat TOTAL like a toy
Go out and buy it boy!

I have some ideas for your mag - charts, posters, news, games of the month, value for money in your reviews, exchange and mart.

Liam McKay
Chester

Dear Liam,

Don't join a band just yet! As for your questions though;
Charts - Possibly
Posters - You got 'em.
News - Pages 8 to 11 old boy.
Value rating - Look at the Lifespan and Overall ratings. If both are low forget it, if both are high get it. If they're average then try it first.
Exchange and mart - We're seriously looking into it. **STEVE**

Mansfield, Notts

Dear Anthony

Either you've been incredibly unlucky in choosing eight of the easiest Game Boy games in existence, or you're a bit of a whizz. In the past, Nintendo owners have been starved of any reliable game-buying advice but that's changed now that TOTAL's here. Just read our review pages and you'll soon be able to choose only the hardest games for your collection. I don't know if you've already completed Castlevania Adventure but both me and Steve have had nervous

Dear M,

The only head-to-head games which don't need two separate game carts are board games like Othello and The Chessmaster. But then these aren't really link up games anyway. All you do is merely pass the Game Boy to the other player when it's their turn to move.

But as for four-player games, yes, you need as many cartridges as there are players. So if you and three mates want to play F1 Race, it could get a little expensive. **STEVE**

Dear Thicky,

Why are most Game Boy games far too easy? I have eight games in total and I have completed seven of them already of them already in only one or two days. (Even you could complete them!) The games become boring and that is not what you expect when you have to pay £20 for one. Can you tell me any challenging games, apart from F.I. Race. The easy difficulty level spoils such good graphics etc.

Anthony Johnson

Dear Total,

Are there any Game Boy games available where you don't need two copies of it to play a two-player game? For games such as F1 Race where you use a four-player link up to have four people all playing simultaneously, do you also need four copies of F1 Race to do so?

M. Kermez

Bedford
PS TOTAL is great and I'm very happy to see a mag devoted to Nintendo.

Dear TOTAL,

I have just bought a Nintendo a few weeks ago so I have a few questions to ask you:

- 1 I heard off my friends that Super Mario 4 was going to come out for the NES is this right?
- 2 I also read in this other dirt magazine that the new Super NES took a while to load in. Is this true?
- 3 When will Double Dragon III be released in the UK?
- 4 Are you going to have a part in your excellent magazine where you can buy and swap games?

Steven Coates
North Shields

Dear Steven

1 Well, Super Mario Bros. 4 is actually a Super NES game so it's doubtful it'll ever be on the NES. mind you, after the success of Super Mario Bros. 3, it would be madness not to do a follow-up at some stage. Don't worry, we'll keep you posted.

2 No. It's utter, utter codswallop. Read TOTAL from now on - we don't tell whoppers.

3 The third in the series is already doing well in Japan and the States, so hopefully it won't be too long before we get to see it, too!

4. It's something we've thought about and you may well see something appearing in the mag in the near future. **STEVE**



Dear Total,

Please could you update my knowledge by answering the following questions:

- 1 Will a colour Game Boy be released in the UK?
- 2 If so will it be compatible with the normal Game Boy carts, and how much will it cost, roughly?
- 3 Will it be as good as the other colour hand-helds?
- 4 Will the Super Nintendo be as good as the Mega Drive?
- 5 When will you be doing Super Nintendo reviews/previews?

Thank you for your cooperation.

John Holder
Crowborough, E Sussex

Dear John,

- 1 Quick! Turn to the news pages.
- 2 Ditto.
- 3 Blimey! Double ditto.
- 4 Better graphics, better sound, better games. Better by far.
- 5 Probably next issue, but we've sort of started already. Why not check out pages 12 to 15 where our wonderfully glorious Super NES feature resides. **THICKY**

An excellent little Mario drawing here. And it's from Paul Wellington of... Oh! Well, he's from somewhere.



Dear Total,

Please could you answer the following questions:

- 1 When the Super NES comes out will you get a free game with it?
- 2 Why has it taken Nintendo so long to decide to release the Super NES in Britain?
- 3 Why has Nintendo decided to change the name because in Japan they call it a Super Famicom?
- 4 Will Mario 4 ever be on the NES?
- 5 Will Mickey Mouse or Bugs Bunny ever appear on the NES or the Super NES?

6 When will Mario 5 be out and what will it appear on - NES or Super NES?

... And finally your mag is the best!

Chris Smith
(Your number one fan!)
Thetford, Norfolk

Dear Chris,

- 1 Yes, you'll get Super Mario World - Super Mario Bros 4, and it's blinkin' fab! Actually that's an understatement, it's one of the best games ever written, for any machine, anywhere. So there!
- 2 Er, I dunno. The 'N' people move in very mysterious ways. Still, every

time they do something they seem to do it right. You can't argue with success like this. I guess we should just be glad it's here at last.

3 Ah ha! Well, if you've read our Super NES feature you'll already know. But basically the NES is called the Famicom in Japan. So when they made the new machine they called it the Super Famicom. Over here they're calling it the Super NES. But why they changed Famicom to NES in the first place is a bit of a mystery. Same reason they changed the casing, s'pose...

4 Don't you listen? We already told that to Steven Coates on page 5. Please try to pay attention!

5. Blimey, you don't want to know much do you? We know of no Bugs Bunny games but there is a Mickey Mouse game on the NES in America. Whether we'll get it or not remains to be seen.

6. We don't know at this stage but if you scour the news pages, you'll discover a story about the Nintendo/Philips CD-I system. It's quite possible that Mario 5 will be the game to show off the new hardware and in that case it should be quite stunning. We can only wait and see, but I can't really see Nintendo not making another Mario game (not unless they are completely barmy - and I don't think so!). **STEVE**



Ooh, we don't know what to look at first. Well done to Matt Haden of Dudley for this gem.



Way to go Mario! And thanks to Liam Donaghy of County Derry for this amusing little stripette.

So, Mario reads TOTAL. Well according to Phillip Barry he does. Where's the address Phil?



Dear Steve and Andy,

My name is Darren O'Reilly (nick-named DAZ), age 11. Like you I am completely Nintendo mad. I own an NES. I think it is the best thing ever! I am going to buy your amazing mag each week. I have only had my NES for a year and I have four games for it. I have some questions to ask you. Can you answer them for me please?

1 Is there a Game Girl?

2 Where can you buy an extension to plug a NES into a monitor and how much is it?

3 When is Super Famicom being released?

4 Are you going to do reviews on Super Famicom and Super NES?

I can't wait for your second issue

Darren (Daz) O'Reilly
Glasgow

Dear Daz,

First let me say that if you're able to get hold of TOTAL every week you must be living near some strange time-bending vortex or something - it's only out once a month. Still...

1 We've heard a rumour (so it could be utterly, utterly false) that there might possibly be a Game Girl, and that it'll just be the same machine, in pink, with a different name. Is it true? Is it a good idea? Who cares as long as it plays games.

2 It depends which monitor you have. If it's a composite video one then it's dead easy to get a lead that plugs into the video port on the side of the NES and straight into the monitor (ask for phono to phono). Your best bet is to take your monitor (or a diagram of its sockets) to an electrical shop like

Tandy, and see if they can help.

3 Originally it was Christmas 1992, but that was then brought forward to spring. And now the general opinion is that it will be sooner, perhaps even as early as March.

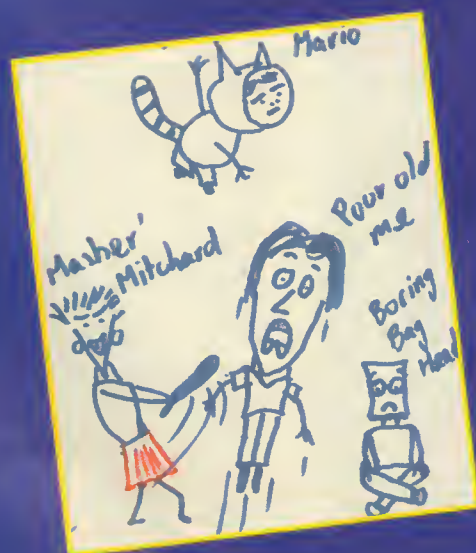
4 No. The Super Famicom is a Japanese machine which plays Japanese games. It's up to you if you want to risk buying an unofficially imported game only to find it's rubbish or unplayable because it's all written in Japanese. We recommend that you be patient and wait for the official release. **STEVE**



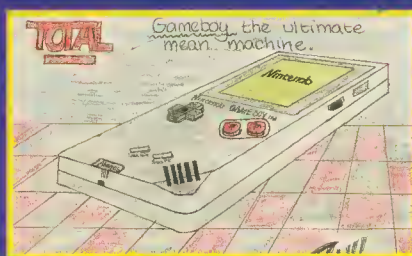
Blimey! It looks like we're suffering from yellow-itis in 12 year old Martin F's piccie.



Paul Fearnley of Fleetwood seems to have fitted the whole of SMB 3 in his picture.



Sorry about this, but here's Thicky's outrageously bad attempt at drawing the TOTAL team. Sigh!



Paul Goodwin sent this Game Boy picture all the way from Ipswich. Better than Baghead's drawings.

Dear Thicky Dyer,

I think this is an excellent magazine with an excellent layout. I love the game down the side of the pages. Is this going to be a regular feature?

That's all for now. Keep up the good work

From an avid Nintendo fan!

Lee Kennell
Coventry

Dear Lee,

As you can see the adventure has been dropped for now. It's a helluva job getting it all written, checked and put onto the pages so doing it every single month is a bit of a pain. No, it's a flippin' great pain! Still, it will definitely return once in a while as it proved so popular the first time around. **THICKY**

Dear Steve and Andy,

I've heard that you can get a lead which plugs the Game Boy into the TV so you can play it using the TV screen. Is this true? and if so where can I get one?

Matthew Sands
Woking, Surrey

Dear Matthew
No way! **THICKY**

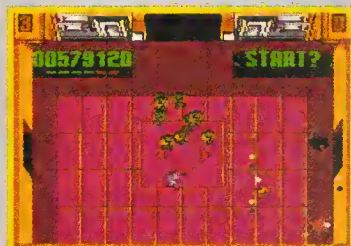
Yes, there's a device called a Wide Boy which allows you to play Game Boy cartridges through a Japanese NES, but it's not available to the public. It's only for Software houses to help them produce Game Boy games. **STEVE**

Coming right up!

SMASH T.V.
For **NES (1-4 players)**
By **Acclaim**
Out **February**

Based on the hit Williams coin-op, Acclaim's Smash T.V. introduces you to the violent world of future T.V. game shows (a bit like the Running Man movie with our man Arnie).

In this frantic blaster, you and a chum (or even three chums, but we'll get to that in a



Okay, I'm sorry. Green tank tops are very fashionable.

bit) control two contestants. The aim is simpler than Dwebo Dyer – shoot everything! The game is set over a series of rooms – once you've killed or destroyed everything in one room, you move into the next. Eventually you'll meet an end-of-level guardian but don't worry about that just yet!

The nice thing about Smash T.V. is that it has super-slick controls, where you actually move the character with one joystick and direct his firepower with the other. Alternatively, you can have one person doing the movey business, and



Mutoid Man on level one takes blimmin' years to kill. Corks!

another targetting the baddie. And then (if you aren't already confused) you slap in the Four Score adapter and do the same for both characters (with four players, yeah?).

It's fast 'n' furious so watch out for a review in TOTAL 3!

TOTAL TALK

If you want to know what's been happenin' in the wacky world of Nintendo, this is the place to be (or perhaps just a bit lower).

Colour me goodd!

Blimey! We haven't even got hold of the Super NES yet and already there's talk of another spanky piece of Nintendo hardware. Trade paper CTW recently reported that a colour Game Boy is to be released this summer in Japan. And no this doesn't mean the case is a different shade of grey. We're talking full colour graphics on a full colour screen. Yowzer!

How do they know this? Er, dunno really. But they reckon that prototypes of the machine have already been bundled off to trusted software developers. So does this mean that all those Game Boy carts can look forward to a new home in the bin?

No way! The new machine is what's known as 'downwardly compatible' – techno-guff for 'excellent! I can play my old Game

Boy games on the new hand-held'. So don't stop buying Game Boy carts, whatever you do!

Although there are only prototypes at this stage, you can be sure that when it finally appears the battery life will be looong (something that Nintendo quite rightly consider of utmost importance and which the producers of other hand-helds seem to have forgotten).

There's also talk of it being pitched at an incredibly low price (presumably to not only compete with, but to blow the competition completely out of the water). Let's face it, the Game Boy with its humble monochrome screen has already astonished everyone with huge sales and widespread popularity among both young and old alike. Slap on a bit of colour and make it compatible and there's

only gonna be one hand-held that anyone's playing – and it'll be from a company that starts with 'N' and ends with 'intendo'.

So, just how will this effect Nintendo players in the good ol' U of K? Well, if it's in Japan this summer at a ludicrously low price (possibly as low as £60), you can bet it won't be over here until sometime next year (1993) and for almost double the cost. So don't start saving just yet!

We don't want to build your hopes up with stupid speculation, but it's enough to say that the news has broken and it sounds pretty definite. We'll do our best to hunt around and bring you some more information on this exciting development as soon as we can. Don't believe everything you read (unless, of course, it's in TOTAL).

The best school in the world?

How would you like the chance to go to school and do nothing else but play Nintendo games? Well if you lived in Japan (and your parents earned tons of dosh) you could do that very thing every day.

Why have the jammy Japanese got this chance? Because Nintendo came up with the idea of setting up colleges for people to come along and learn programming. At the moment there are only a couple of places up and running but more are planned.

Basically, the student coder's mums and dads pay millions of Yen in order to go to one of the colleges for up to four years. (Don't worry

about that too much, though. A million Yen is only actually equivalent to a couple of hundred quid.)

During the four-year stay, the youngsters get to learn how to program for the Game Boy, the NES and even the incredibly gorgeous, spammy, fabby, trilliantly over-the-top and incridulously gnarly Super NES. At the end of the course, if they've been really good and attended all the keyboard-tapping and pixel-painting lessons (not to mention Super Mario-playing and blapping baddies) they get a certificate and the chance to program for a living. Whaddya reckon – is that a deal or what?

Game for a lass

Amongst the TOTAL! spy network, rumour has it (and it is only rumour you understand) that a new version of the massively successful cute-yet-def Game Boy is to be launched.

Called the Game Girl, the machine will have only one major difference from the version that is already conquering the pockets of game freaks across the planet – it will be pink.

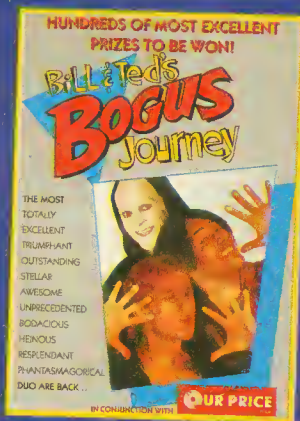
Aside from this change – which is meant to appeal to girlies because everyone knows girls like pink (oh yeah?) – the games played will be exactly the same. It's hoped that this change of style won't mean that we'll soon be seeing softy titles like Terminator 3: Pillow Fight, My Little Pony Wars, Low Hem-Line Man and Skate Or Stay In.

Most bodacious dudes!

Two treats in one go! Yuppity-yip. Bill And Ted's Bogus Journey is out in the cinemas now (that means it'll be out on video before next Tuesday probably) and you also have the chance to win a copy of Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure on the Game Boy (that's the thing on the far right).

You'll have to go into one of 300 Our Price record and video stores scattered around the country in order to pick up a leaflet (they're the ones with Nirvana playing loud because the hippy shop-chaps like it, and not to be confused with HMV where they always play Pavarotti).

There are over a million leaflets floating around (the thing on the right) so even you might be in with a chance to win. And if you



entered TOTAL's Game Boy comp in issue 1, you'll even have a machine to play it on. (The compo's still running, so if you haven't got issue 1, you should turn to page 72 sort of now-ish.)

Coming right up!

TERMINATOR 2
For NES/GB (1 player)
By Acclaim
Out April

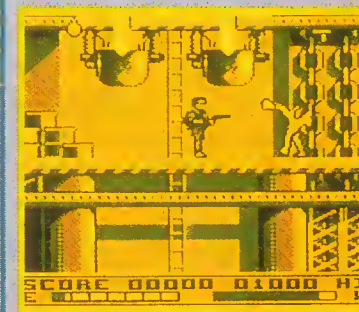
This is a typical NES run along 'n' blast 'em up split into five different scenes from the movie. The T-800 Terminator unit (that's you) first stomps and shoots his way through the Truck Stop bar. From there you're taken on a 3D bike battle against the T-1000 in a massive truck. Next stop is the Pescadero Mental Institute to rescue Sarah Connor. With the gang all together again, you



There's two of Arnie's biggest fans in the background, see? sneak into the Cyberdyne labs. Get out of there in one piece, and Arnie faces old shiny in a final duel of the Terminators.

The Game Boy version has run 'n' blast multi-level action, but also features sections based on scenes that never made it into the final film. These early levels are set in the future where, as John Connor, you have to battle Skynet's Hunter-Killer robots in order to reach and shut down the Terminator production plant. Once there, John attempts to re-program a T-800 Terminator unit so that he can send it back in time to protect his younger self!

Both games sound brill, so tune in next issue for more info!



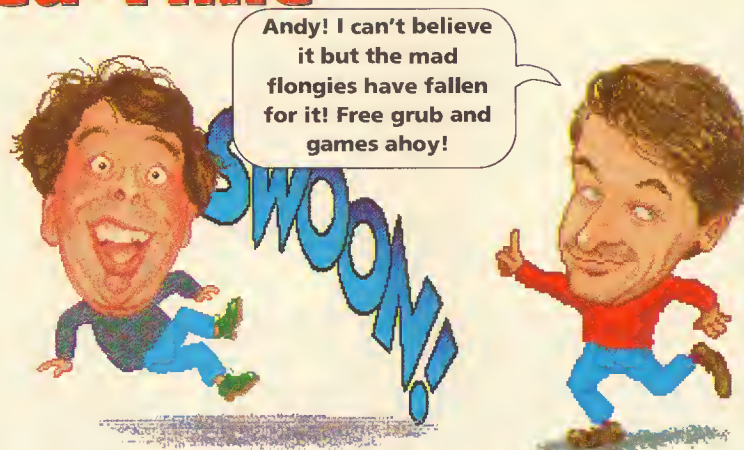
Arnie's final show-down with the T-1000 Terminator. Scarey!

TOTAL Tea-Time

Oh dear. The TOTAL! Tea-Time idea seems to have gone down quite well. Amazingly well... In fact, we've had zillions of entries, but there's only one Misery Guts and only one Thicky (thank the great god of 'Only Having One Of Really Awful Things'), so there's only one visit - this month.

Baghead's cute new assistant Vicky rustled around in the Tea-Time box and drew out the letter from (cue drum roll...) **Daniel West** of Highbridge in Somerset.

Dan's 10 years old and his fave game at the moment is Super Mario 3. Which is bad news for Thicky and Stingey 'cos they're both rubbish at it. We'll bring you



a full report in issue 3!
Apologies to everyone else, but in the mean time, keep sending in your entries because

next month someone else will be as unlucky as Dan. The address is TOTAL! Tea-time, 30 Mornmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

Nintendo invades Europe!

Has your Dad been burbling into his Christmas brown ale about all this, 'It's 1992 and all the news-readers will have to talk in Italian from now on because Europe is becoming one huge supermarket' stuff? Well if he has, he's wrong, because Nintendo has beaten all the politicians over in Brussels and Maastricht. Europe has already been united by the big 'N' - it's now a massive games arcade!

Last year the company managed to sell such a humungous number of NESs and Game Boys that there are probably more brilliant games machines in Europe than there are strings of onions and garlic.

For example, in France 1,500,000 NESs and 1,000,000 Game Boys were bought, while 600,000 NESs and 2,400,000 Game Boys were snapped up in Germany.

'Yeah, so what?' you cry. Well, this means that Nintendo will have to start taking Europe (and that means us) really, really, seriously. Up until now it has been launching all its new stuff, such as the Super NES (see our brilliant preview on page 12), in Japan and America first. But with this many millions of machines littering Europe, Nintendo would have to be pretty dim not to take more notice.

This is also great for games:

more machines means more people will want to make games, which means more games, which means more for you to read in TOTAL! which means less time for Thicky and Stingy Bag to be let out of the office and onto the streets with normal people.

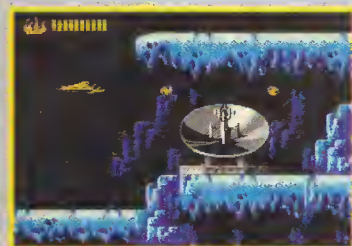
Finally, and just so you can have some brain-belted numbers to chuck at doubters, there are more people in Europe than in the United States and Japan. So it might not be too long before all the new Nintendo kit is released over here at the same time as Japan and the States. Well... We live in hope, eh?

Coming right up!

CAPTAIN PLANET
For **NES** (1 player)
By **Acclaim**
Out **February**

If you've seen the cartoon on telly you'll know how sickeningly twee Captain planet is. He's a sort of caretaker for the whole of the earth and whenever some ecological disaster strikes, he'll be there to tidy up the mess (*wish he'd visit Andy's desk then - Steve*).

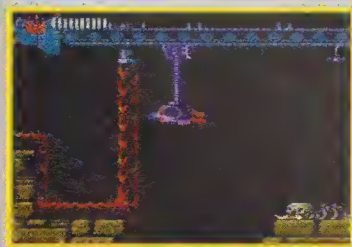
In this shoot 'em up-platform-swimmy game (there are several different game styles



Look at the size of that dish. And it's rotates smoothly too. in it) the earth's water and air is being polluted, National Parks are being used as toxic waste dumps and elephants are being killed for their ivory. Just like real life (sigh...).

There are all sorts of power-ups to be had which are based around the elements of earth, air, fire, and water. Captain Planet also has his Geo-cruiser (plane), Eco-copter (helicopter) and Eco-Sub (yep, a submarine) to make his life easier.

It looks pretty good (with some wicked animation) and it makes a change from the usual violence served up in games.



Oh dear! Captain Planet has become Captain Had It. Sad. From what we've seen (or, rather, failed miserably to see) it's also incredibly difficult. Watch out for the full review next month, Planetears!

TOTAL shock! Mag gets new staff!



Flippin' great! She'll probably make us tidy the office. I thought Baghead was bad enough and now there's another stupid arty-type flongy! Urgh!

Yes folks, after hacking though issue 1 all on their lonesome, the Important People at Future Publishing (headquarters of TOTAL) have decided to give Steve, Andy and Baghead a bit of help.

Well, they've actually brought in Vicky 'masher' Mitchard (that's the sweet thang there on the left) to keep the dweeboids in order.

Vicky comes from Bristol, which is a big village just south of Scotland, and has a

horse called 'Flicker' (gawd knows why, maybe he sort of flashes on and off...). Oh. According to Vicky (who just may be as mad as the other three) it's because 'Flicker' is the sort of horse equivalent of a movie film-star name. Or something equally daft.

Anyway we hope you give her a big friendly TOTAL welcome and send her some nice letters. Erm... Otherwise she says she'll come round and break your arms. Oh dear.



Blinkin' flip! I bet she'll want to play on my- Er... Our games as well! Darny-double darn-dobbledy er...

Several Nintendo facts

- 1 Nintendo are based in Tokyo - the capital of Japan. The President of Nintendo is called Hiroshi Yamachi. He lives in Japan and has more money than Princess Di's hairdresser.
- 2 6.3 million Game Boys have been sold in the USA already. That's a lot.
- 3 11.56 million Game Boys have been sold in Japan. That's an awful lot!
- 4 Bandai (those nice people who distribute Nintendo stuff in the UK) reckon that there will be 1.6 million members in Club Nintendo by the end of the year!
- 5 The Game Boy was the biggest-selling toy this Christmas beating the likes of Barbie dolls, Lego and NKOTB figures.
- 6 The Japanese don't just use their Nintendo's for games. Try this one on for size... They also use them to play on the Stock Exchange and to bet on horse races. They are able to do this because of some megadacious add-ons fixed to their Super NESs and Game Boys. Neat, huh?

Heart-starting fun!

When George Bush, ex-pilot, ex-bestest friend in the whole world of Ronald Reagan, and now President of the United States, had a heart tremor last year, there was only one cure: a Game Boy.

Georgie (I've got my finger on the big red button that could turn the whole world into Pot Noodle so don't pick on me chummy) was running near his country home at

Camp David, probably away from some muggers, when the old ticker decided to go on the blink. He was rushed to the nearest hospital in the presidential Reliant Robin, fed on icky hospital food and made to watch the Young Doctors - but all to no avail.

Then all of a sudden one of his aids had a brainstorm. 'Let's get him a fantabulous Game Boy.

That'll keep him quiet and stop him whinging about politics and other boring stuff.' So they did. And according to Nintendo: "... This was the only way to help the President recover after his heart scare."

So there you go - if you're feeling a bit down and sick, just whip out the old Game Boy, slap in a cart (Dr. Mario, perhaps?) and you'll be better in no time.

Haven't I heard that somewhere before?

Washing machines, cookers, fridges – boring, boring, boring. But maybe not. Check out the latest Ariston advert on the TV (you know, that thing you plug your Nintendo into). Listen hard and you'll hear, playing sweetly in the background, the theme music to Robocop on the Game Boy. Odd, huh?

And while we're on the subject of TV ads 'n' stuff. Have you seen the latest Game Boy ad from Nintendo? According to our music correspondent the percussion fill at the beginning is from Salt 'n' Pepa's Push It, but the main theme is called Biting My Nails from Renegade Soundwave's Soundclash album. Boy, are Nintendo hip or what?

Shiny CD people playing games

Nintendo doesn't hang around when it comes to technology. It's spanking 16-Bit Super NES is all set to sweep Europe off its toes and there are already firm plans for the next Big Thing.

This will be Compact Disc-based technology. At a meeting in London last year Nintendo announced to a hall full of chaps and chappesses in slick suits that it was joining up with Philips in a system called Compact Disc-Interactive (CD-I).

Compact Discs can store great, globbering chunks of game info – so much that all of the Super Mario Bros games could be stored on one disc hundreds of times over – and with stereo sound as well.

The plan is that Nintendo gives Philips the rights to use many familiar and famous game characters on a new machine based on CD-I. Characters will include Princess Zelda, Mario, Link and the



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Future Publishing Ltd, Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW Tel: (0225) 442244

Production Editor

Salary according to experience

Baldy: 'You know what, Thicky, I reckon this mag needs a Production Editor.'

Thicky: 'A wot!?'

Baldy: 'You thicky dweeb, don't you know nothing? You know... Someone who's worked with Quark Xpress, can spell, possibly has publishing experience, can keep a team running to strict, unforgiving deadlines and can keep us two from mucking about all the time.'

Thicky: 'Pffft! No chance.'

Baldy: 'Furthermore, you workshy fop, we need someone who can sub copy while preserving the *Total!* tone of voice. It doesn't matter if they don't know lots about Nintendo gaming, though obviously it would help.'

Thicky: 'Oh, I see.'

Baldy: 'If only we could find such a person! We could offer them a competitive salary! The opportunity to work on an exciting and dynamic magazine! The chance to live in the world's most beautiful city – Bath!'

Thicky: 'What was that about a salary?'

Baldy: 'If only someone brilliant would send a copy of their CV and a sample of their writing – published or otherwise – to Stuart Anderton at the address below. That would be great!'

Thicky: 'Salary? Like money, being paid...?'

Coming right up!

GHOSTBUSTERS 2
For Game Boy (1 player)
By Activision/HAL
Out Soon

This is a sort of overhead-view maze game in which two Ghostbusters (one controlled by you, the other sort of in-tow) run around trying to collect up all the spooks. The front man fires a photon



Ray sucks in a spook while Peter reads the wallpaper.

stream to freeze the ghosts then the back-up 'buster uses his back-pack to suck them up. The cutesy Japanese style graphics look pretty darned good with some neat animation. What does it play like? Read the review next month!

TROG
For NES (1-2 players)
By Acclaim
Out April

This cartoony game is all about a little prehistoric monster, whose tricky task is to collect all the eggs from each level.

A tribe of vicious one-eyed cavemen are out to get the little blue guy. Still, he gets power-ups, and Trog can also change into a Tyrannosaurus Rex so he's not completely defenceless. Could be a hoot!



Trog the dinosaur goes on a deadly Easter egg hunt.

GB carts on way!

old favourite Donkey Kong.

Speaking on behalf of American Interactive Media, the company that will develop the games, Dr Bernie Luskin said: "We're delighted that these favourite video game characters will be available for Compact Disc Interactive" He went on (and on and on and on) to claim: "The technology will bring a level of interaction and realistic game play with titles featuring the Nintendo characters, never previously experienced by Nintendo fanatics".

Translated into earthspeak this means: "Wow! Great! Mario and Zelda on CD. They'll be able to pack so much into this stuff that it'll make an arcade machine look like a biscuit tin with worn out batteries. Word up!"

So not only can you expect to see the Super NES before the year is out, you never know, CD-I Mario might also be showing his face too.

There has been a huge wodge of Game Boy games released or announced recently so here's a brief look at what you can expect to see over the coming months.

● Mindscape have just released Paperboy (the NES version has sold over one million copies!) and have Game Boy Gauntlet II and Paperboy 2 ready for imminent shelf-dom.

● Ocean's Robocop series continues with Robocop 2 coming shortly to the Game Boy (and NES). That's a goodie and no mistake.

● Acclaim's Marble Madness is about to hit the Game Boy along with WWF Super Stars and Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure (dude).

● Let's hope Kemco have their act together for the second Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle adventure (the first was a bit tame).

● Turtles fans will be thrilled to their socks to know that Turtles 2 is about to hit the small screen. You thought the first one was good!

It's fast, it's clever, it's colourful and it sounds like someone left an entire orchestra inside. The NES's big brother is in town and it's come to kick some butt!



DREAM MACHINE

The Super NES story

Hands up all those of you who have heard of the Nintendo Super Famicom. Thought so – loads. Hands up all those who have heard of the Nintendo Super NES. Ah-ha! Not so many. Well a lot of you may not have realised that both of these machines are in fact one and the same. They look completely different both in shape and colour but all the inside techno-gubbins are exactly the same.

The machine you all know and love as the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) is only called the NES in Europe and America. In Japan, where it originated, it's called the Famicom, a sort of abbreviation of Family Computer. So when Nintendo released the next model in Japan they naturally called it the Super Family Computer or Super

Famicom. The reason you've heard so much about this one is that it's been around in Japan for ages. Only recently was it released in America with a different casing and under the name of Super NES.

Of course what you guys are really interested in is when it'll arrive here in Britain. Well no one really knows for definite, but indications are that it should be here any time from March to June – that may sound a bit vague, but rest assured you won't be waiting for it in July! Advertisements for it have already appeared in several magazines – which in itself is a pretty strong indication of it's imminent arrival. Hold onto your hats, it won't be long before you can get your grubby little mitts on this astonishing piece of kit.

Next question. What makes the Super NES so

astonishing? Well, the brain of the beast is a 16-bit processor as opposed to the eight-bit processor in the NES. Without getting bogged down in tedious technical rubbish no-one really understands, lets use a simple analogy. If you think of the two machines as railway stations, the NES has eight platforms and the Super NES has 16 which means that the Super NES can deal with double the amount of trains at once making it faster and more efficient.

Hmm... That's almost right. Tell you what, we'll make the eight-bit station a small country platform dealing with sprinter trains and the 16-bit station something like Euston full of high-speed 125s. That's a bit more like it. Now what all this waffle actually translates into is games with greater

The European Super NES

The game-running bits inside the Super NES are exactly the same as those in the Super Famicom, but the casing and cartridges have been altered for the European (and US) market. Game paks are bigger and a lot squarer. The colour-coded buttons on the Super Famicom controller have been replaced by purple ones, as have the on/off and reset switches. And the joypads have much longer leads for some reason!



The Japanese Super Famicom

This beast has a 65816 processor running at 3.58 MHz. The screen resolution is 512x448 (229,376) pixels and can show 256 colours on screen from a palette of 32,768. It can show a maximum of 128 sprites made up of 64x64 (4,096) pixels. The sound chip produces multi-channel FM quality voices in stereo. Both joypads have Start and Select, plus four fire buttons with two finger pads on the leading edge of the controller!

Mario 4

The first game to be written for the Super NES was the fourth instalment of Mario's ever-expanding adventures.

Super Mario World – Super Mario Bros. 4 adds even more depth to everyone's favourite platform game. Gameplay is most similar to SMB3 but there are a few new twists: Mario has befriended a small dragon called Yoshi and rides around Mario World on his back. The first time you see this it's hilarious – the soundtrack changes to include funny tom-tom sounds and when you press fire, Yoshi's tongue lashes out and drags in any nearby enemies. With squinted eyes and a big gulp, the bad-guys are belly fodder!

Mario can fly again in this outing (thanks to a super-cape) and also has a bigger repertoire of moves – all made accessible by the extra buttons on the controller.

As well as completing stages, Mario also has to search for secret Switch Palaces which release invisible platforms. Without these you won't get very far in the game!

But, of course, the main hassle comes from Bowser and his Koopa clan. These are as difficult to beat as ever, but for once, the game carries a battery inside so you can save your game more or less whenever you want to. Once you've finished each area you

don't have to go back – unless you really need to, of course.

The major difference between this and previous Marios is in the quality of the sound and graphics. The animation is as gorgeous as ever, but the scenery is wonderful. Mode 7 is used to supply some nasty rotating platforms and you'll have to watch out for evil hazards like bullets that fill the screen!

The soundtrack is great and whenever Mario enters a cavern the Super NES's echo feature is used to really creepy effect.



It's no good looking all surprised and googly-eyed – you could see Mario and Yoshi coming from a mile away!

But for real spookiness, you can't beat the Ghost Houses. These are swarming with tiny transparent ghouls who give our Mario a hard time – as if solving the Ghost Houses wasn't difficult enough!

There are 99 different levels to complete in Super Mario World but reaching every one of them is a major feat – some of the levels are extremely well hidden.

Super Mario 4 is stunning. If you enjoyed SMB3 then you'll love every, jumping, flying, running, ducking, shooting minute of this!



Er... Mario, I know this is probably a bad time to mention it, but have you ever had the feeling that someone is watching you?

detail, bigger sprites, speedier scrolling and more impressive gameplay all-round.

But the thing is, the Super NES is not only much faster and able to deal with much more information at any one time, it also has loads of other built-in features. It has a palette (or choice of colours) of 32,768. This is 32,716 more than the NES but, more impressively, 32,256 more than a certain other 16-bit console we could mention!

Not bad, but more important is the amount of colours a console can display on screen at once. The Super NES may have over 32,000 colours available but it couldn't possibly display them all at the same time. In fact it can only display 256 at any one time. Is this a bit sad? Not when you consider that its main rival can only display a paltry 64.

True, 64 is still quite impressive, but it's only when you see *four times* that amount in action that you really begin to realise why the Super NES is such a stunner. And just to rub salt in, the custom graphic chip has an excellent transparency feature which allows artists to make see-through objects, like clouds or ghosts. It's just a clever colour trick, but it works beautifully! When you've seen a Super NES running, most other consoles look as dull as ditchwater by comparison.

The Super NES also has all the following in its favour: a screen resolution of 512 x 448 pixels (the dots that make up the picture), 128 sprites on screen at once, and a sprite size of 64 x 64 pixels. All that adds up to an awful lot of awfully colourful and awfully detailed action.

We shouldn't forget the sound chip either. Nintendo have done a fine job on this, producing

what is considered to be the best sound chip in any games machine, anywhere. Superb FM quality sounds blast out in stereo – hook it up to your amp and speakers for a true arcade experience!

But the one thing that really makes the Super NES shine is Mode 7. Now, if you're about to ask for a detailed and technical description of the inner workings of Mode 7 you're out of luck. Very basically, it's a piece of technical wizardry which can take a backdrop (like the scrolling scenery in an NES game) stretch it, shrink it, expand it, scroll it and distort it – all at an alarmingly high speed.

This would be kinda useful if you wanted to display the rotating blades of a windmill without the fuss of drawing each frame of animation. But the real joy of Mode 7 is that it can be used to produce convincing 3D environments which don't cause the machine to either slow down horribly or explode from the strain.

If you take a look at the screenshots of the game *F-Zero* below, the following explanation will be that much clearer. Basically, the course is created by drawing a flat, two-dimensional map of the track. The Super NES then displays the portion of track your car is on while expanding the picture at the bottom of the screen and compressing it at the top. The track now has 3D perspective. The next step is to scroll the screen downwards, do a bit more distorting, and repeat the process. The

Blimey Steve, you're looking a bit pushed up! What's goin' on? Have we got visitors?



No, you flongacious twonk! I'm going to get another job so's I can afford a Super NES!



track now looks like it's whizzing past you in 3D.

It's the final results in both looks and speed that you can achieve with Mode 7 which place the Super NES head and shoulders above any other affordable games system in existence.

Yes, affordable. We're not talking loose change but the expected price tag of £150 for the Super NES is a serious bargain. It's only slightly more expensive than its nearest competitor and yet far superior. It's a bit like picking up a Porsche for a thousand quid more than a Metro... Need we say more? **TOTAL!**

Mode 7

Almost everything about the Super NES is better than its nearest competitor. But the one outstanding feature which will have your eyes on stalks is Mode 7.

This stunning piece of custom hardware takes a graphic plane (like a normal background) and can rotate it, zoom in, zoom out and distort it at free will.

You can use it for the subtlest of effects like making a baddie spin out of existence in *Super Mario World*, or you can go the whole hog and create a completely convincing three-dimensional playing field. The shots on the right show Mode 7 in all its glory.

Two of the first Super NES games to come from Nintendo are *F-Zero* and *Pilotwings*. *F-Zero* is a race game in which the entire course is created using Mode 7. By distorting the screen as it scrolls from from top to bottom the programmers produce a realistic viewpoint of a racing circuit. Then, by simply rotating the track whenever you move the joystick left or right, they can get your hovercar to turn corners.

This is one of the few racing games in which you can actually see other parts of the race track before you're on them. Not only that, but you can even turn your

hovercar around and race along the course the wrong way!

The speed of *F-Zero* is mind-blowing – static screenshots on a page do nothing to convey the thrill of this high-speed action!

On a gentler note, *Pilotwings* is a flight simulator in which you practise the controls of different flying machines from a bi-plane to a jet-pack. The ground is displayed by drawing a detailed area of land and using Mode 7 to shift it around. Your flying

machine always stays in the middle of the screen and the scenery moves around you.

Again the result is breathtaking. Catch a thermal in the hang glider and the result is physically stomach-churning!

The potential is almost limitless. For instance, the sequel to *Solstice* (reviewed in issue 1) – called *Equinox* – has some scenes where your character stays in the middles of the screen while the entire landscape rotates around him!



Imagine this roadway moving faster than a Tornado at take-off and filled with boy racers after your blood. *F-Zero* is superb!



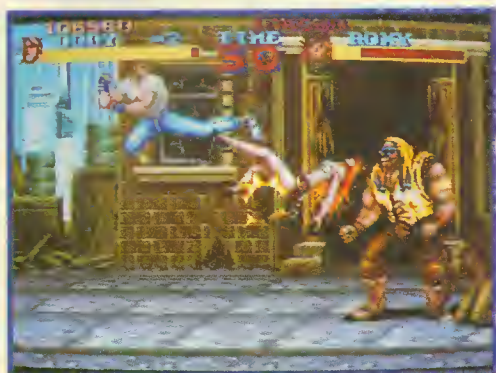
Now, that's more peaceful... Gliding high above an island, catching thermals (the white stuff) and chillin'. Mellow, dude.

Magnificent 9

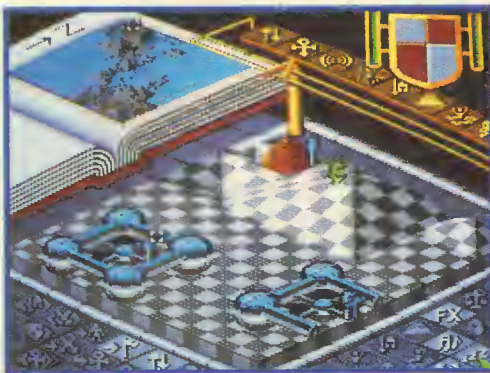
OK, it doesn't matter how stonkingly zoomy the console is if you don't have some decent games to play on it. So, just what can you expect to see over the next few months? The games below are already available in Japan (and some in America) so there's no reason why they shouldn't appear on the Super NES sometime this year. And there

are many more to come, including some real doozies: *Zelda 3: A Link To The Past* – Similar gameplay to the classic *Zelda* games (reviewed on pages 20 to 24) but with enhanced visuals and sound and an even greater adventure. *Contra 4* (working title) – Packed to the gills with Mode 7 effects Konami's run 'n' blast 'em

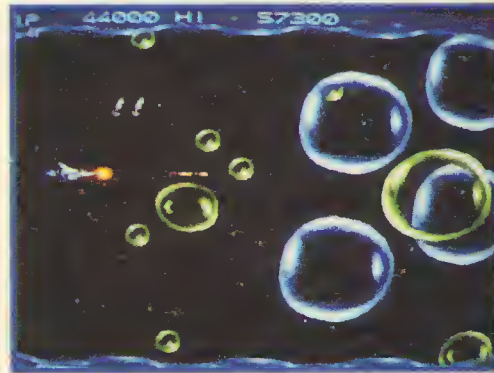
up has sideways scrolling sections plus overhead maze scenes which rotate and zoom – even with simultaneous two player action! *Lemmings* – The brilliant computer game makes its appearance on the Super NES and is as madcap and frantic as ever. You control an army of lemmings to try and stop them plummeting to their doom!



Street Fighter – One of the slickest beat 'em ups you're ever going to see. This almost arcade-perfect rendition lacks only the two-player option of the original. Great action plus some real punishing sound effects!



Populous – This classic computer game has been transferred to the Super NES. Play a god with control over the elements, and protect your people from the enemy by raising mountains and creating floods!



Gradius III – The sequel to the sequel to *Nemesis*. This intense shoot 'em up has some wonderful power-ups and heaps of blasting energy. Gob-smacking visuals and sonics – what more could you ask for?



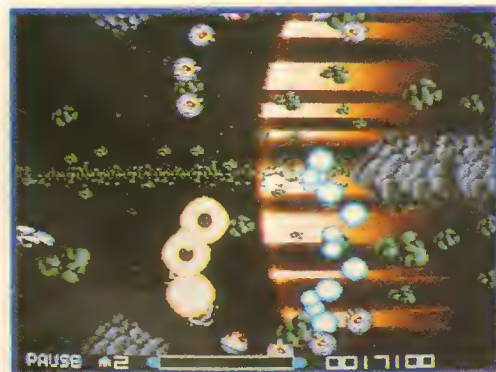
Actraiser – A real showcase for the Super NES's graphics and sound. This amazing arcade adventure mixes action scenes with *Populous*-style people-ruling. The over-the-top soundtrack is most triumphant!



Hole In One Golf – Nothing special on the gameplay side, but this four-player golf game is a hoot! Some spectacular close-ups of the hole and watch out for the Mode 7 fly-past of the green – it's a stunner!



U.N. Squadron – Also known as *Area 88* in Japan. Well, it's a shoot 'em up, right? Wrong – it's a totally stonking shoot 'em up with some of the most gorgeous backdrops you ever did see in a shooter.



Super R-Type – Take the best bits from *R-Type* and *R-Type II*, four programmers, five artists, three musicians, an editor and nine months and what do you get? A seriously meaty piece of game, gruesome and great!



Super Ghouls And Ghosts – Now we're talking business! This is better than the coin-op – no kidding. The gameplay is tried and tested but the spooky new levels are astounding. One of the best carts so far.



Castlevania IV – Simon Belmont returns in a new adventure. After the first few tame levels, this winds up to be a spectacular adventure through creepy caverns and rotating rooms! And those tunes, yow!



WIN A MIRACLE KEYBOARD

TOTAL!



If you haven't seen our review of this splendid machine then go and do so now. It's on page 28 and it's great. It's got Stingy Bag and Thick in it and ... Well... Go and take a look.

Right, impressed, huh? Yep, we thought it was dead smart too, but no-one on TOTAL! has the time to learn (we're far too busy doing the mag) so what should we do with the keyboard?

Why not give it some deserving reader we thought, and so, thanks to Mindscape (the nice people who make it), we've got a Miracle Piano Teaching

System to give to one of our lucky readers.

Obviously you've got to earn it – we're not just giving it away. No, what we want you to do, since it's a musical sort of thingy, is write a TOTAL song.

You can do as much or as little as you like. You could just write the lyrics on the back of a sealed envelope, or you could make a tape and send it in with full musical backing and singing and everything (mind you, you won't get the tapes back. Sorry).

You can make it as long as you like and do whatever you like, but make sure we get your entry by

February 24th. It's not long so get cracking. We'll judge the entries and tell you who the winner is in TOTAL issue 4.

Send your musical missives to: **'Hey Mister Songwriter' Compo, TOTAL!, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2DL.**

Here's a verse we just made up as an example:

TOTAL! is fab, TOTAL! is groovy,

If you don't buy TOTAL! baby...

You're a bit of a berk.

(Yes, well lets hope you can do better than that, eh?)



WEEEEARRGH! Get up, do your groove-thang. Yeh, you do fine thangs to meeeeee baaaybeee!

(Grumble, moan) I hate this modern music. It's all the same. And you can't hear the words...



TOTAL COMPO RULES

Members of Future Publishing or Mindscape or their friends or relatives shouldn't really enter we don't think. Anyone called Stock, Aitken or Waterman definitely can't enter! You can send as many entries as you like – there's only one keyboard up for grabs so it don't not matter any. The Editor's decision (old Misery Guts himself) is final (and probably wrong).

Review info

This is the important bit – the game reviews. Every review goes into a lot of detail on what each game is actually about. But if you want to know quickly what the good and bad points are, check the ‘thumbs up’ and ‘thumbs down’. These will give you a good idea of the game’s merits and any major faults that we’ve found. But that’s not all...

GOOD THINGS

If we think there are any particularly nice features in the game we’ll bung ‘em in here

BAD THINGS

If there’s anything outstandingly bad about the game then we’ll jolly well say so here

... If you want the *full* low-down on the game, look at the TOTAL! ratings box. It breaks down and rates the looks, sounds, gameplay and life span of each game. The meters rate from 0 to 10. The more green squares, the better the rating. Of course, lots of red means bad news! Have a gander at the one below to see what we mean.

TOTAL!

Looks

■ What are the graphics like? Is it an oil painting in pixels, or doggie-doo in dots?

Sounds

■ Do you want to rush out and buy the 12" re-mix? Or just reach for the volume?

Gameplay

■ Good graphics and sound are nice, but this is what counts. How much fun is it?

Life span

■ What if you can finish it in a day? Great gameplay is no good without a long life.

This is where me and Andy get to sum up. You can tell exactly what we think about a game just by reading this bit and looking at the rating!

Final rating

55

Percent

This month



Swords and Serpents

Page 18

Whip out your wand and cast some spells in this four-player, dungeon romp. It could take time, it's huge.



Zelda

Page 20

Older than your great, great, great grandmother. But beneath the crude graphics lies a stonky adventure.



Zelda 2

Page 22

Link is at it again! This time he... Er, has to save Hyrule from disaster. Same old story really. But is it better?



Shadowgate

Page 24

More 3D dungeon antics, but rather than trembling with fear, you might be guffawing at the awful animation.



Power Blade

Page 26

This looks a bit of all right. But perhaps finishing it in a few hours while wearing a blindfold is a bad sign.



Duck Tales

Page 32

Scrooge McJarratt (sorry, Scrooge McDuck), travels to the ends of the earth for some useless cheesy treasures.



Robocop

Page 34

Serve the public trust, protect the innocent, finish it in a week. This slick-ish walk 'n' shooter might be a tad easy.



A Boy And His Blob

Page 36

The title says it all really. There's a boy, a blob and very little else. Take a tedious break on Blobolonia.



Roller Games

Page 42

Nothing to do with Skate Or Die even though you skate a lot and die even more. Gets better the more you play.



Low G Man

Page 44

WOWZER! The weird combat system makes this beautifully presented platform game a cut above the rest.



Marble Madness

Page 46

This game was brilliant when it first came out. Er, but then, so were the Bay City Rollers. Showing it's age a bit.



Ski Or Die

Page 49

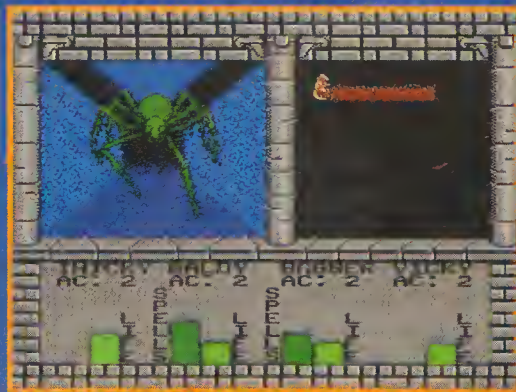
The reviewers only just recovered from the boredom of Skate Or Die. Now they have to suffer this pile of slush.

TOTAL!

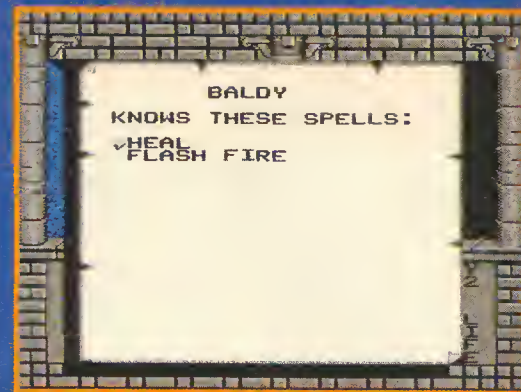
NES REVIEWS



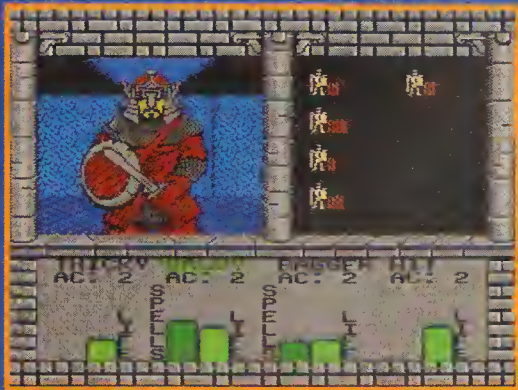
1 Barely two steps into the adventure and the TOTAL! party is set upon by a Sega owner (to be this ugly takes ages).



2 After making short work of the beast, they turn a corner only to find a lucky money spider! (Let's face it - they're doomed).



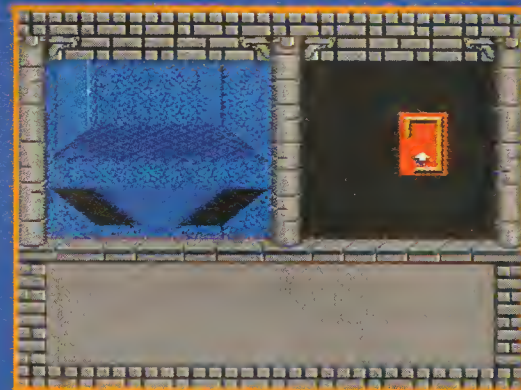
3 One severe thrashing later they're all feeling a little unwell, so Baldy whips out his wand and conjures up a heal spell.



6 'Oh brilliant,' says Baghead, 'a party. Let's gatecrash.' Of course Baghead is utterly blind and the team get another pasting.



7 More by luck than good swordplay the TOTAL! boys (and girlie) survive. Steve did particularly well and is awarded a leather.



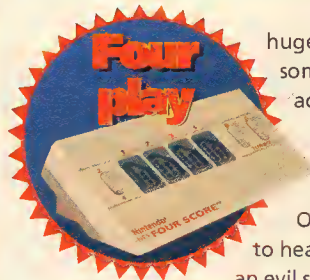
8 Miraculously, our adventurers have found the lift to the second level. Unmiraculously, they can't make it work.

SWORDS AND SERPENTS

**For NES
(1-4 players)**

From Acclaim

Price £35



hugely smart and with the ability to cast some zappy spells - my personal favourite (actually) and Thief (wimpy as a cheap hamburger but agile and intelligent, able to open locked doors and stuff but don't trust him).

Once you've partied yourself up, it's time to head dungeonwards in an attempt to slay an evil serpent. Why can't some of these games be about rescuing beautiful mountain bikes, or making enough dosh to visit Japan eh? eh? Never mind, on with the battle.

Once inside the dungeon you are faced with three main screens: a large, main one with atmospheric pics of what's going on in front of you.

Four players? Oh yeah. And this game needs all of them. Playing it as a one player game is fun enough but there's a four man challenge here. There's plenty to do and loads, and tons, and zillions, and quadropillions, and other vast made-up stupid sounding numbers of enemy dweebs to be beaten up (or to be beaten up by if you're rubbish at fighting).

This dungeon and maze exploration game starts off well. You get to choose your party of four adventurous adventurers. This means flipping through a selection of pre-defined characters in order to find some with suitably stonky levels of

Strength, Intelligence and Agility. You then get to choose names for yourselves. And you also get to choose which profession you want to be. You can choose from Warrior (big, beefy and preferably extremely thick so he goes at the front of the party and gets smashed first), Magician (fairly strong,



Four player action and plenty to keep you occupied. Excellent control system and automapping which makes life so much easier. Beautifully drawn beasts



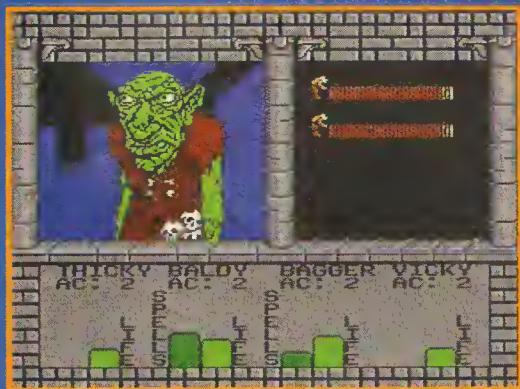
special. There's no real brain power required. While the characters are gorgeous the scenery is very, very boring, as is the control panel



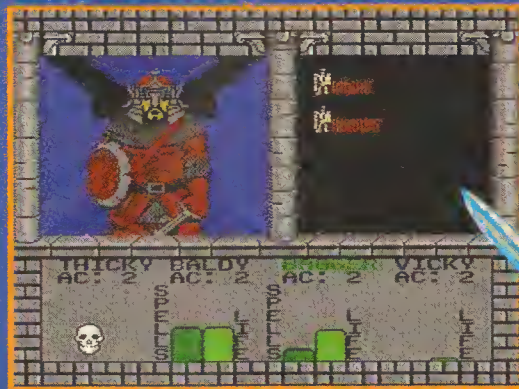
4 Baldy's spell fails miserably, so they're glad to meet a wise old monk, who tells them about a nearby healing temple.



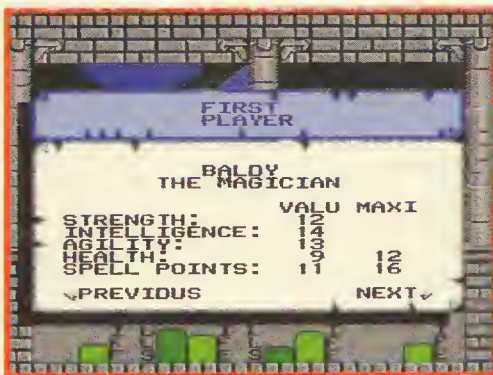
5 After following Thicky's directions for three days, they arrive and have their wounds tended by monkeys. (Sorry, monks.)



9 Several flights of stairs later, they meet up with Baldy's twin brother. 'Oi bruv! Where's my flippin' Kylie LP?' he asks.



10 Oh dear! Perhaps 'Bog off you ugly gimp!' was a bad response. Now he's got his mates round and poor Thicky's dead.

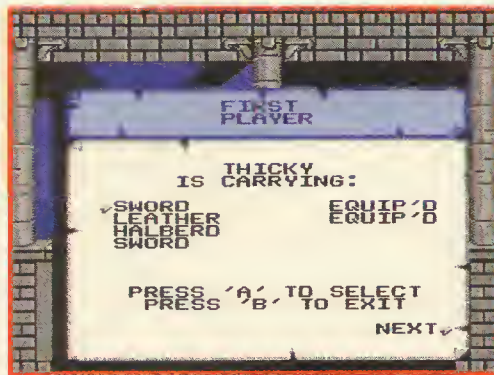


Yes, I know you'd rather see monsters and stuff but a game this deep needs a little explanation. This screen shows your character's attributes so you can gauge how good he'll be in combat and stuff like that.

One to the right that holds an unfolding map of where you've been. And one at the bottom that holds all the information on your characters such as how much life they have left, how much spell power the magicians have left, the armour class (how hard you are) and whether or not you have made a 'hit' or 'miss' in combat.

Movement is easy, and you will often find yourself interrupted by enemy spiders, troopers, zombies, dragons and other fiendish horrors. Aside from these creatures, you'll also be met by crusty old sages who drop hints of advice in your direction as to what to look for and what to do next.

Fighting is quick fire with much button-pressing



This is Thicky's inventory screen. As you can see he's wearing leather armour and fighting with a sword. The other two items that he picked up during the quest are just going to waste in his backpack so...

and spell-casting. Each player gets to fight in a random order based on character abilities. Once you get in the groove with this idea, it can add to the excitement no end as you wait for your chance to have a go at the foe.

Dying comes easy but luckily, if you have discovered a temple where the good monks cure you, you are transported back there as soon as the entire party is dead. Although this could set you back a few miles of game space it is better than being chucked out of the game altogether. And fortunately, because of the automapping feature it's easy to get straight back to where you were. 'But what's automapping?' I hear you ask. Well, the

TOTAL!

Looks [Progress bar]

■ The display panel is fairly basic but the animated characters make up for it

Sounds [Progress bar]

■ Not much to write home about, no in-game 'crunches' or 'thwocks' to beef it up

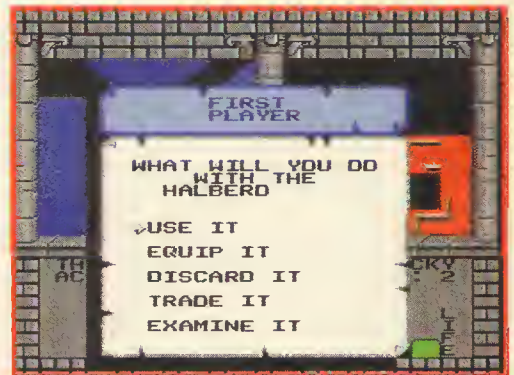
Gameplay [Progress bar]

■ Fighting and exploring galore. Solo play is good, playing it with mates is better

Life span [Progress bar]

■ There are 16 big levels to this thing. You'll be hacking away at it for yonks

The bland scenery is brightened up by some beautifully drawn characters. It's atmospheric and action-packed and you're never far from a fight!



... He can enter this option screen. If he decides to fight with the Halberd instead of the sword he can click on 'Equip' and it's done. Alternatively he could use the 'Trade' option to pass it on to one of his mates.

top right portion of the screen is a map window showing a simplified diagram of your position. When you start you can only see the bit you're stood in. As you move through the corridor the map builds up so you always have a decent record of the explored sections of dungeon. Great stuff!

Swords and Serpents is a basic game of exploration and fighting with a smidgeon of buying and selling, prize winning and running away thrown in. There are no real puzzles to solve, nothing to tax the brain, but heaps of fun to be had with a few mates. Nothing outstanding, just a spiffing good dungeon-maze maraud. **ANDY**

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

For NES (1 player)

From Nintendo

Price £40

A long, long, *long* time ago, the world was in an age of chaos (a bit like Thicky's desk, come to think of it). Our story takes place in the peaceful little land of Hyrule, when an invading army nicked a natty little widget called The Triforce Of Power.

This nicked widget was an immensely powerful object capable of... Well... Oooh, lots of things. The nickers – stop sniggering at the back there – were Ganon (the Prince of Darkness) and his army.

The Princess of Hyrule at this time was Zelda. She was a bit put off by the whole business, and decided the only safe thing to do was split up the remaining Triforce – the Triforce of Wisdom – and hide the bits around the kingdom.

This got up Ganon's nose, somewhat, so he grabbed Zelda, stuck her in a dungeon and sent off some soldiers to find her nursemaid, Impa, who'd run off to raise the alarm.

They soon caught up with the old trout, but just as they were about to finish her off, along



If Link heads in a westerly direction, he'll eventually reach this cave. So, is it filled with ghostly apparitions and evilness...?



Er... No. It's the dreaded shopkeeper of doom, who bombards you with his awful banter until you actually buy something.



Once you've spent all your housekeeping money, you can keep tabs on your worldly belongings using the inventory screen.

Up above

Here's the entrance to the Level 1 labyrinth, 'Eagle'. To see what's inside, take a look over there on the right...

The forest is full of creatures to kill. One touch of Link's sword and they keel over – sometimes leaving useful items behind.

At the start of the quest Link's first port of call is this cave. There he meets the old man who lives on the island. He gives Link a sword.



This map shows just a tiny part of The Overworld of Hyrule. As Link moves about, the view flips from one screen to another, and the dotted box shows the size of one screen. There are only eight in our little map (made by 'Link'-ing screenshots together) and there are 99 to explore (not including the Underworld). Now you can see just how big Link's quest really is!

comes the brave young Link (that's you). He drives off the baddies, and Impa gives him the low-down on the whole nasty business.

Being the brave, upstanding, noble and, er, mad peasant that you are, you decide to seek out the fragments of the Triforce – all eight of them – and defeat Ganon. Oh, and rescue Princess Zelda while you're at it.

Hmm... Not as easy as it sounds. For a start, you haven't got a weapon and you don't know where you are. Luckily, there's an old bloke in a cave right by where you start, and he gives you a wooden sword (daft old berk!).

Now you must set out to explore the Overworld (basically, the ground and everything above it). It's a damned big place, mind, and is filled with a variety of vicious creatures. Link starts off with three heart containers. These are drained as you get hit and once they're all empty it's game over.

Just as well, then, that you can pick up new hearts when you defeat some enemies. And watch out for the captured fairies that are sometimes released – these get you back up to full strength. Finally, collect all the cash (shiny red rubies) left behind when you stick the baddies with your sword. Save up enough cash and you can buy extra weapons from the shop-caves dotted here and there about the land.

Now it's all very well stomping around Hyrule, killing and collecting, but the real key to this quest lies amid the Underworld levels. There are eight of

these and you'll find the entrances as you explore the Overworld. Each Underworld level contains a set of rooms, every one of which contain horrid monsters, but only one of which contains a piece of the precious Triforce...

The game controls take a bit of working out. You move around using the direction controller, and you hit button A to use your sword. Button B only comes into play when you've collected a few extra weapons like the boomerang, bomb, or bow and arrow.

You select extra weapons by pressing the Start button. This brings up a screen showing all the things you've collected so far (it isn't long before you're pretty well tooled up.) Move the cursor

over the one you want to be activated by button B, and hit Start again. Simple.

Zelda has got a huge game area to explore, masses of different monsters and loads of objects to collect and use. It's all very entertaining, but the game is starting to show its age a bit. The graphics are tame, the 'flick screen' scrolling (as you move from screen to screen) is horribly slow, and there's really not that much variety.

Still, if you want a quest to keep you going for weeks, a huge game world to explore and some tough, but solvable puzzling, this'll do the trick!

In fact, I think this is one for my personal software collection – THWACK! Ow! Maybe not. **STEVE**

MAGIC
Massive quest plus battery back-up means you can play and play!

TRAGIC
Starting to show its age in the visual and sonic department. Awfully slow 'flick screen' scroll

TOTAL!

- Looks** [Progress bar: 10 squares, 7 green, 3 red]
 ■ Lots of nicely animated monsters. Slow 'flick-screen' scrolling is a real drag
- Sounds** [Progress bar: 10 squares, 7 green, 3 red]
 ■ The stirring theme tune is all right (for a while), but the effects are coarse
- Gameplay** [Progress bar: 10 squares, 7 green, 3 red]
 ■ Masses of riddles to solve and hundreds of creatures to destroy! Very captivating
- Life span** [Progress bar: 10 squares, 7 green, 3 red]
 ■ Great battery back-up, but slow game-play takes the edge off the excitement

I reckon that if anything is going to set you off on the adventure trail, this is it. The quest is vast but do-able, and the task really holds your interest. A total classic!

Final rating
78
Percent

Up above

Here's a small problemette. What's behind that locked door and how do you open it? Easy, kill those three grey blobs and push that block in the middle of the room.

Oh crikey! Bats – and lots of 'em. Still, they're no real competition for your trusty blade and your boomerang of doom.

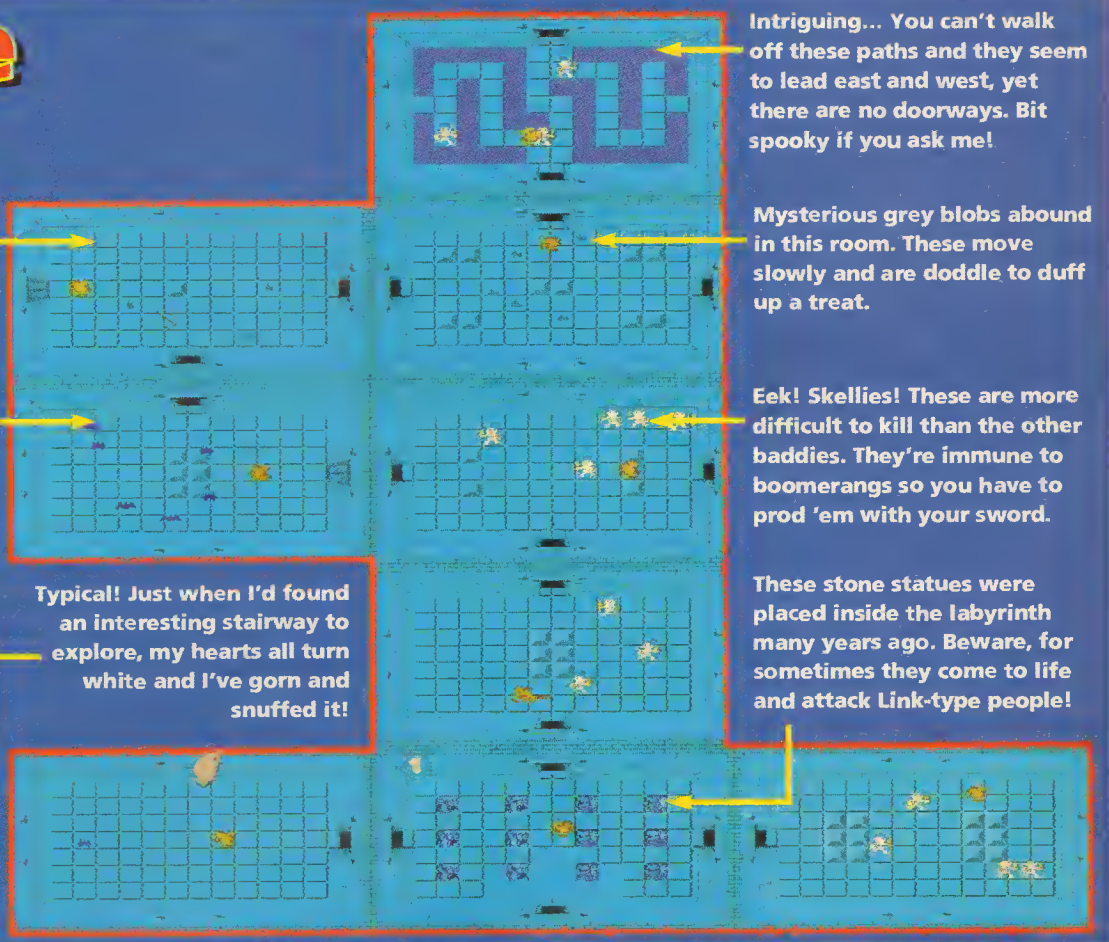
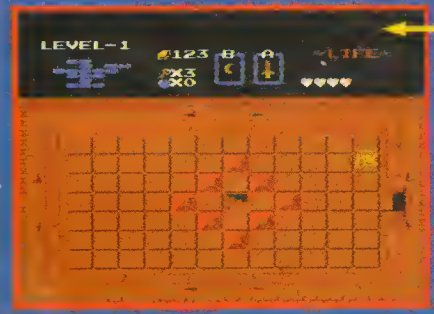
Typical! Just when I'd found an interesting stairway to explore, my hearts all turn white and I've gorn and snuffed it!

Intriguing... You can't walk off these paths and they seem to lead east and west, yet there are no doorways. Bit spooky if you ask me!

Mysterious grey blobs abound in this room. These move slowly and are doddle to duff up a treat.

Eek! Skellies! These are more difficult to kill than the other baddies. They're immune to boomerangs so you have to prod 'em with your sword.

These stone statues were placed inside the labyrinth many years ago. Beware, for sometimes they come to life and attack Link-type people!

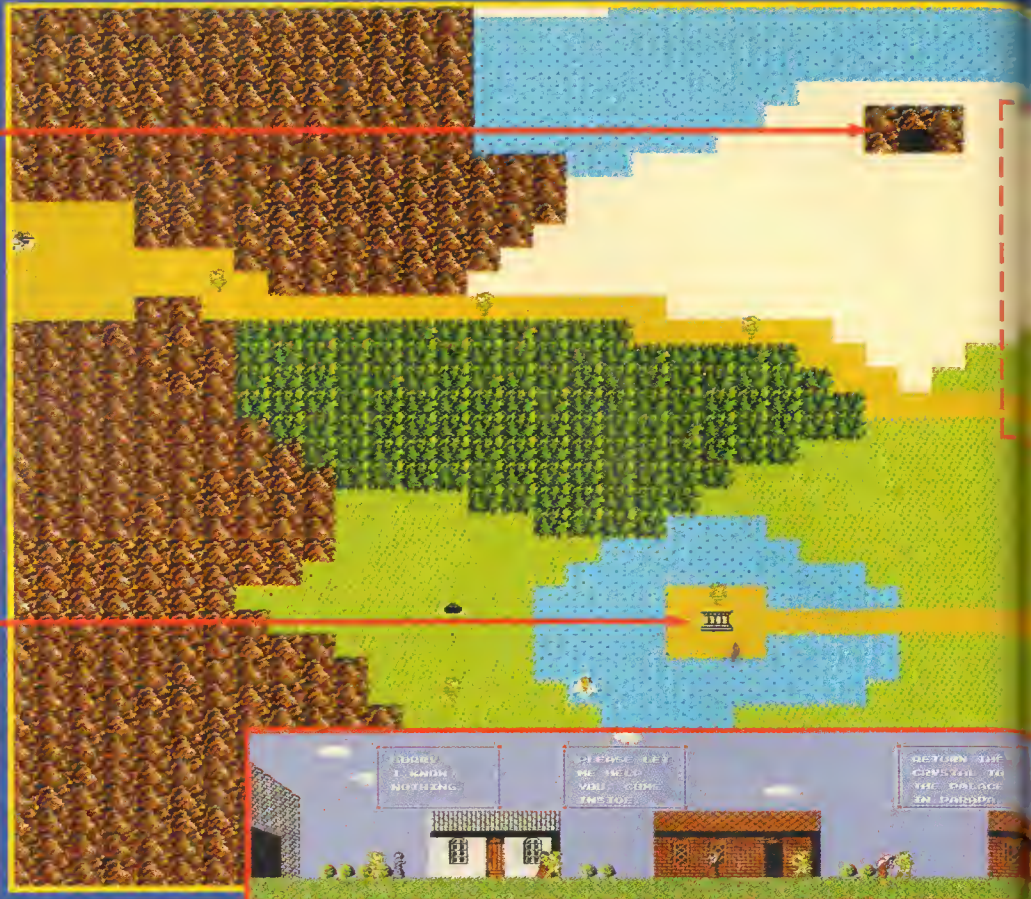




One of the many dark and dangerous caverns in the game. This one is in the Tantara desert, but it's a dead end.



Ah! The delectable Princess Zelda. Sadly, there'll be no snoggy-stuff for Link 'cos she's asleep for all eternity.



THE ADVENTURE OF LINK

ZELDA II

OF LINK

For NES (1 player)
From Nintendo
Price £40

Many years have passed by since the brave young Link found the fragments of the Triforce of Wisdom (Zelda I – previous page) and destroyed the evil Ganon, Prince of Darkness. But all is still not well in the kingdom of Hyrule. The evil of Ganon still remains – indeed, Ganon will return if the blood of Link is sprinkled on his ashes...

There's worse to come, though. Princess Zelda (she's the damsel you rescued in the original game) has been placed under a spell, and she now lies sleeping forever in a dark room in a distant wing of the palace.

Hang on. If you rescued her in the first place, how come you didn't know she'd been sent into

an eternal sleep? Oh well, never mind.

The point is, you've now got to go off and save the world again. This time you're looking for the third Triforce – the Triforce of Courage – to make up the set (a bit like collecting football cards). Only the Triforce is hidden in a palace in The Valley Of Death, and locked in place by a binding force. This binding force can only be released if you place a crystal in a stone statue in each of six palaces dotted around the kingdom of Hyrule.

What we've got here is basically *Zelda I* with



LINKS
Lots to see and do, this game is huge – you'll discover new things each time you enter Hyrule



GANONS
Continue option always puts you right back to the start. Too much aimless wandering

knobs on. In the first game you had to wander round the Overworld, finding doors to the Underworld levels so that you could rescue the bits of the Triforce. This time you're still wandering the Overworld, but instead of the Underworld you're exploring six different palaces.

The way the game plays, though, is a much bigger difference. In *Zelda I* you viewed all the action from overhead. This time, you only see the exploration bit from overhead: as soon as you get to a town or a palace, it changes to a side-on view.

The first side-on bit you come to will probably be a small wood just north of your starting point. Here you'll get your first taste of fighting. You can jump, duck and stab with your sword, and every time you kill one of the small woodland creatures (it's OK, they're nasty, vicious little things) you gain 'experience points'. The more experience points you get, the better you are at fighting.

When you get to a town you won't have to do any fighting, but you will need to get information from the locals. To do this you get close to them and press button B. They then tell you something

SHADOWGATE

For NES (1 player)

From Kemco

Price £40

You're a king with a heritage. It's a long and honourable one, and you would have expected it to allow you to sit around for a few years enjoying the feasts or indulging in the odd joust or two. No way royal dude. You have to prevent the evil warlock from unleashing his pet Behemoth (which means huge, ravenous beastie probably wearing an Arsenal away shirt just to show that it doesn't care about being laughed at).

To do this you must visit Castle Shadowgate,

track down the evil-doers and generally be tall, brave and hopefully alive by the end of it.

Yes, it's yet another case of wandering about looking, opening, taking and using magical-type things. You're on your tod here with little advice coming from any quarter, and more ways to die than a plump, porksome pig at the annual bacon sarnie-lovers convention.

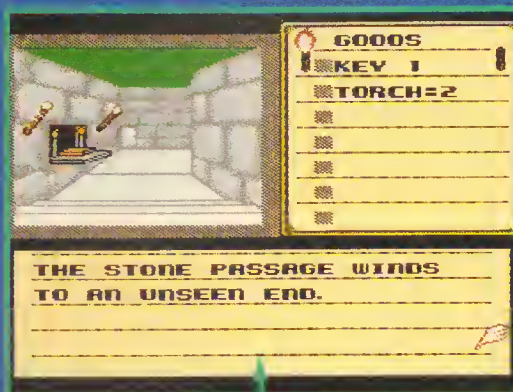
That's a major problem here, by the way, and one that will probably have the majority of players

saying to themselves: 'Well that's the fifth time I've snuffed it on level one. Why don't I put this one in the cupboard under the stairs until a really rainy day, like monsoon season preferably?'

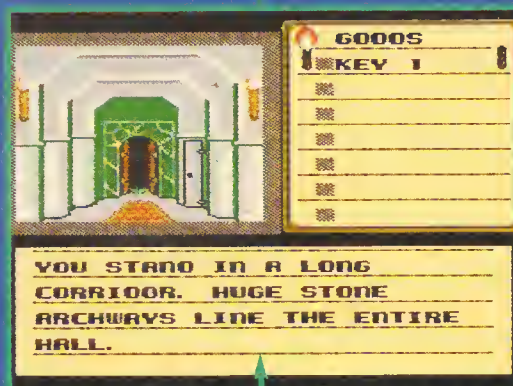
Obviously, the hardworking people who sat up for days on end putting this huge adventuring saga-like-epic together thought a great deal about it. They thought 'mummies', they thought 'sharks', they thought, 'collapsing floors', 'slime', 'mazes', 'puzzles' and they thought 'death and lots of it'.

Dungeoneering dweeb

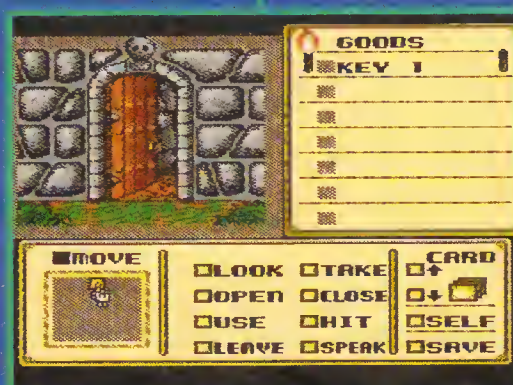
3 Ah ha! What's this? A book. It is time for I 'Thicky The Studios' to stop and have a read. AAARGH! (Ho, Ho! The gimpoid fell for the old book operated pit trick - SJ.)



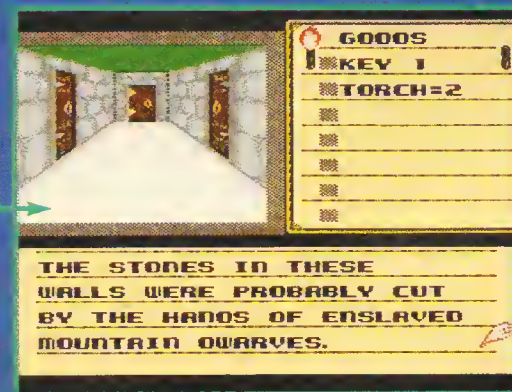
2 Stand aside, for I 'Thicky The Cunning' know a neat little trick with a hairclip and a length of twine. I'll have this door open in a jiffy. (Someone tell him that there's a key outside - SJ.)



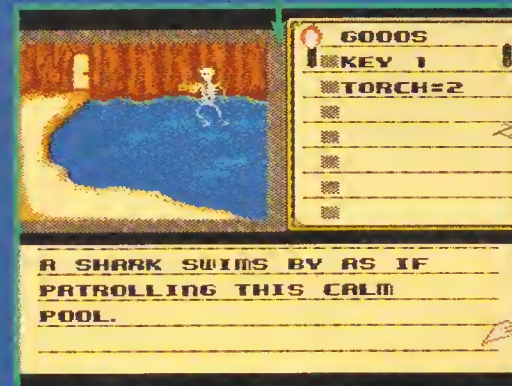
1 It is I, 'Thicky The Brave'. Slayer of all things evil and stomper of all things squishy. I will enter castle Shadowgate and give the Warlock Lord a piece of my mind. (Are you sure you can spare it? - SJ.)



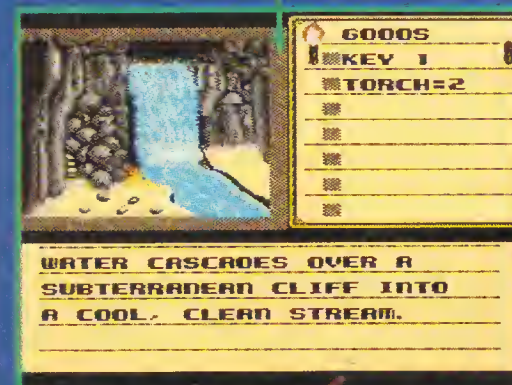
4 Mmm... Four exits. It is time for I, 'Thicky The Decisive' to choose my destiny. I must go north. No, sou... Actually I think east might be better. Oh, I'll toss a coin.



5 Heh! A shark-infested pool with a vile skeleton in the middle of it. Time for 'Thicky The Scared Stiff' to pass straight through to the next room methinks.



6 Oh poop! That stairway is blocked by a boulder. What shall I do? (Perhaps 'Thicky The Incredibly Thicky Weed Thicky' ought to give up right now - SJ.)





This corridor is being guarded by an angry dragon. Try stealing something and...

This last point really interferes with your ability to concentrate on the game. It looks grand, but it only takes a few hours to realise that the basic idea behind Shadowgate is Learn and Avoid.

What this means is that, for example, you go into a new room with three doors. You look at all of them. You open each one of them. You move through the one on the left. You are thumped senseless in the dark because your torch suddenly goes out, and you're treated to a really irritating message: 'It's a sad thing that your adventures have ended here'.

The next time you go to the room, you don't bother with the left one. Instead you go through the one on the right where you fall through the



... Ouch! Still, if you picked up the shield first, it protects you from the flames.

floor to your death. Pah! So, the next time you go back, you go through the door in front of you. Lo and behold! You're into another room, this time with four doors. You just know that three of them end in doom. Can you be bothered? Probably not.

It's all just a bit disappointing really. The graphics aren't all that bad, but the scenery is ruined by some laughable animation. The sound could have been better too. But the major downer is the sudden

death. Again. And again. Poor game design makes Shadowgate a bit of a dead loss.

TOTAL!
ANDY

TORCHES

There are heaps of places to visit. The puzzles will tax your brain cells for quite a while. Background graphics are generally pleasing to the eye

TORTURES

Death, death and more death, which simply cuts any desire to explore because there's a 90% chance you'll snuff it sudden-like. What animation there is, is awful

TOTAL!

Looks



Well-drawn backdrops. But the animation is jerky and ruins the atmosphere

Sounds



It jingles and it jingles and it sounds great switched off. Pretty poor really

Gameplay



Once you can get through several rooms without dying it does get quite fun

Life span



If you're incredibly patient then this one could last. Otherwise, it's a bit boring

Some pleasant scenes but it's frustrating to play. There are no second chances and you never get injured, you just die - then continue

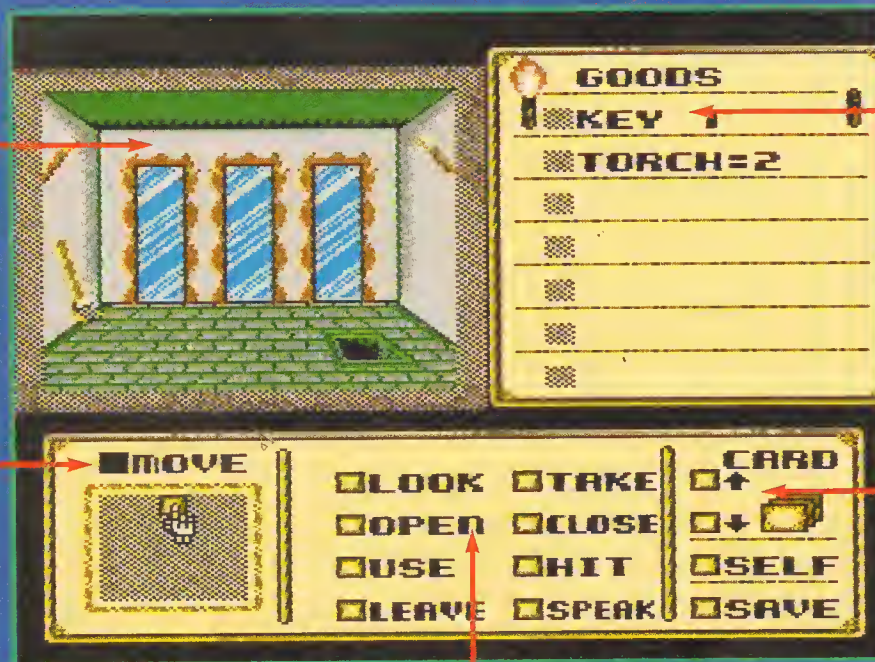


Final rating
74
Percent

Menu master

This is your window on the world. If there's anything of interest, it'll be shown here in glorious colour (and sort of 3D).

There are two ways in which you can move. Either click on the move button then click the pointer on one of the little exit squares on this room map. Or you can merely select move, put the pointer over one of the exits on the view window above and hit button A.



Your inventory card, or put more simply, stuff wot you 'ave collected. Again it's all done with the on-screen pointer. To use a torch, click on the 'use' icon, then on 'torch', simple as that.

The card is, in fact, that thing above with your possessions on it. When it gets full another blank one appears. This card icon enables you to flip through them all to see or use what you've got. The 'self' option enables you to use objects on yourself (like potions for instance).

This is where you do all your interacting with the game environment. By selecting these options you can pick up and drop things, open and close doors and stuff, and examine or talk to things.

POWER BLADE

For NES (1 player)

From Taito

Price £35

Sorry, I'm not convinced. If, in the future, the human race decides to populate the planet with robots, I don't think they'd be stupid enough not to include an 'off' switch in case things went horribly wrong. And yet, in Power Blade, the human race has populated the planet with robots, things have gone horribly wrong, and – oh plop – there's no 'off' switch.

No, instead Nova (wielder of the legendary Power Blade), is going to have to infiltrate the seven sectors of his home town, collect an ID card which allows him access to the central computer in each level and shut

down the rampaging robots himself.

Still, as I've already said he does own the legendary (and very potent) Power Blade. Unfortunately, because it's so powerful, Nova needs a special protective suit before he can use it and the stupid nonce doesn't keep a spare at home. So another mini taskette is to find a protective suit in each of the levels. He doesn't have to

find one but it does make life an awful lot easier, so it's recommended.

During the times when Nova doesn't have a suit, though, he uses powerful boomerangs. There's an unlimited number of these available but at the start of the game they only have a short range and can only be fired one at a time. Killing opponents sometimes reveals a bonus icon which

has a powering-up effect on Nova's weaponry. Star icons increase the range of his boomerangs while boomerang-shaped icons enable him to throw more than one at a time. There are also different



NOVAS

Loads of varied robo-beasts! Some stunning scenery. Neat password system that lets you restart with all the stuff you collected before you died

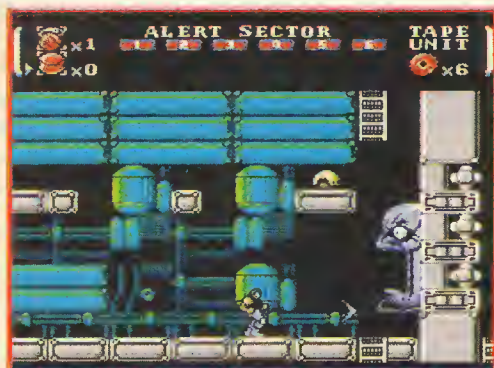


LADAS

Apart from getting sent back to the start each time you die there's only one major fault – it's easy to finish. Even a cheese plant could do it in a week



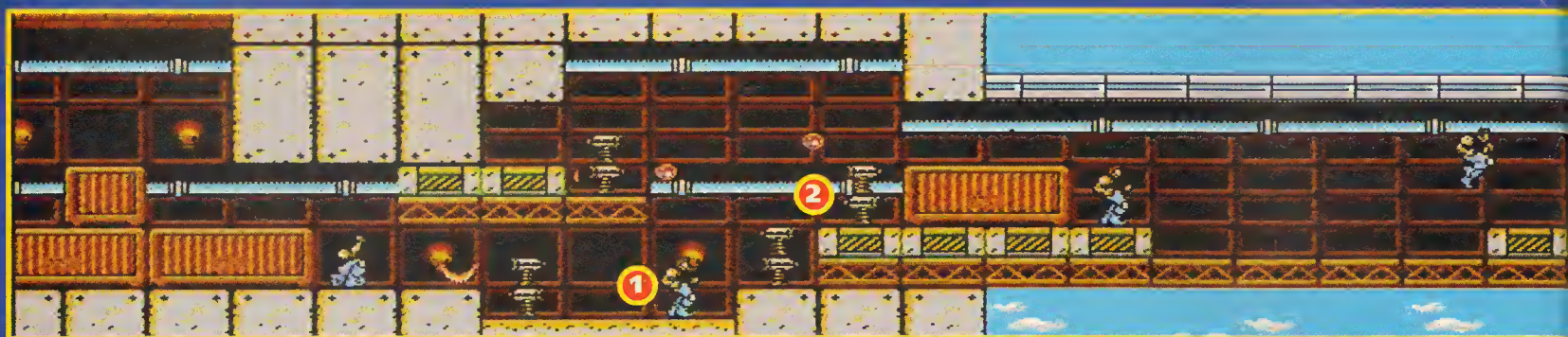
Bat-bashing is a doddle in normal mode, but try it in expert mode and one slight tough will cause you to plummet. In this shot, Nova has stupidly decided not to keep his distance. Geek!



This bloke should have brushed twice a day as a child. But no, instead he's destined to live his life gumming people to death. If you don't kill him quick, he blows killer bubbles at you.



Ah ha! The power suit. Now I can wield the Power Blade thus... FOOM! Hmm, this makes things even *less* challenging. Perhaps I should have gone for the Leotard Of Patheticness.



Super Nova

Here's a flippin' great chunk of Sector 4, showing all the nasties that Nova has to contend with. He'll do it though, he's fab!

- ① The hero. He can leap a bit, he can shoot a bit, he can even die a bit. What a guy!
- ② These turrets shoot three fireballs then pause for a bit of a rest. Wait, then blast 'em.
- ③ Spinnny balls. Wait until they're under the platform then make your move.

- ④ Robocop has a lot to answer for. This ED-209 look-alike shoots bullets and walks about. No tactics here, just blast!
- ⑤ Yikes! Moving turrets. You can't kill these until they rise up, and they only rise up when you get near. Ha! Tough!
- ⑥ Hurrah! The power suit. This is the protective thingummy-wotsit that

- enables you to use the Power Blade. It can only take three hits so treat it carefully.
- ⑦ Nova's not a very popular bloke. Not only are the robots after him, even the frogs hate his guts. These leaping loonies are easy to kill but a little harder to avoid.
- ⑧ The big metal fish shoot big fiery balls at you. Fry 'em before they fry you.



He may look a bit fearsome but this end-of-level guardian is just like all the others in the game – stupid. Unfortunately they all follow very simple and very predictable movement patterns which is one of the reasons this game is so easy.

coloured boomerangs which can increase the effectiveness of his attacks against the enemy.

Right. The big N is pretty heavily tooled up so what exactly does he have to do? Well, each of the six main sectors can be done in any order so first he has to choose his sector. Then he travels through the platform-filled environment on his search for the ID card. Once this is obtained it's hunt the central computer time.

On finding this, an end of level security 'thing' must be combatted before the sector is successfully shut down. Fortunately, there's a brilliant password option in the game so that if the heroic Nova collects an ID card then dies before reaching the end of the level, the code can be entered and any collected cards will be retained.

Once all six sectors have been shut down, Nova has to get to the brains of the computer system and face the final challenge before getting things running smoothly again.

Mind you, all of the sectors are absolutely teeming with lunatic droids so it's not as straightforward as it sounds. One of the nicest things



Behold! 'Tis the ball-throwing, purple lobster-beast from the sewers. These deadly black balls are bad enough, but then you have to contend with the rotating chequered ones as well. Death by round things happens a lot in this game.

about the game is the vast array of varied and ingenious opposition you come up against. Like walkers, giant bubble heads, robot fish, lasers, and fatal frogs to name but loads.

There are plenty of different locations, too, all beautifully drawn and coloured – and even animated in places. (My favourite is the wobbly green sewer – Steve).

Onto more depressing thoughts though. The major fly in Power Blade's ointment is that it's a complete doddle. There are two skill levels in the game: normal and expert. In normal mode contact with opponents merely reduces Nova's energy. In expert mode, touching a bad guy both reduces Nova's energy and causes him to recoil. This makes the game harder in situations where accurate platform jumping is required. But even so, you'll complete normal mode in one day's hard play and have expert mode beaten by the end of the week. And that simply isn't good enough is it?

This game only has two real faults. One is the lack of useful restart points in each of the levels...

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Lots of varied and well-animated beasts. Some nice backdrops too, yip!

Sounds



■ Rip-roaring soundtracks coupled with hefty sound effects. Not bad at all

Gameplay



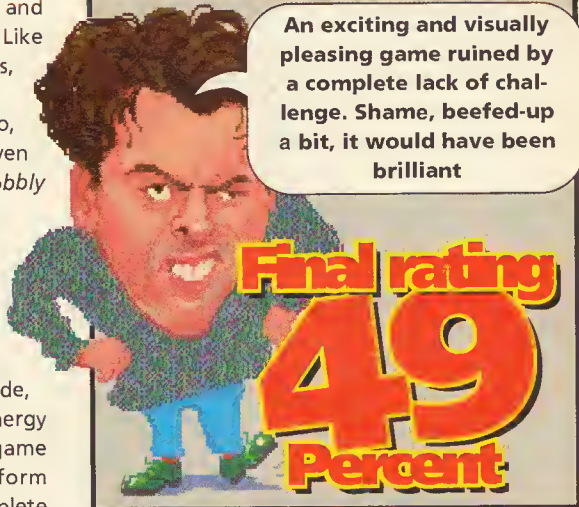
■ Initially it's a bit frustrating but once you're used to it gets pretty exciting

Life span



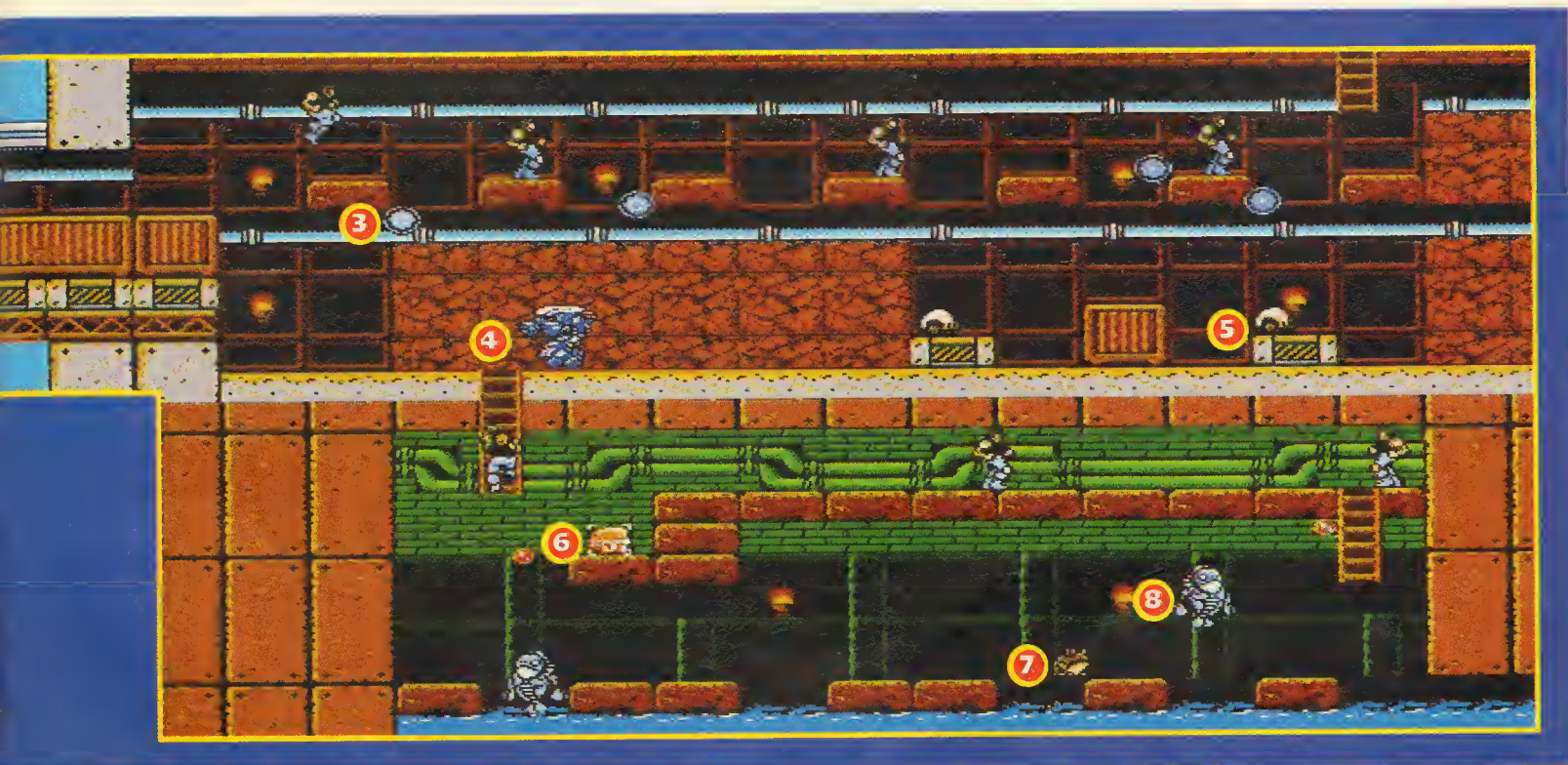
■ The levels are big but the challenge ain't. The guardians are stupidly weedy

An exciting and visually pleasing game ruined by a complete lack of challenge. Shame, beefed-up a bit, it would have been brilliant

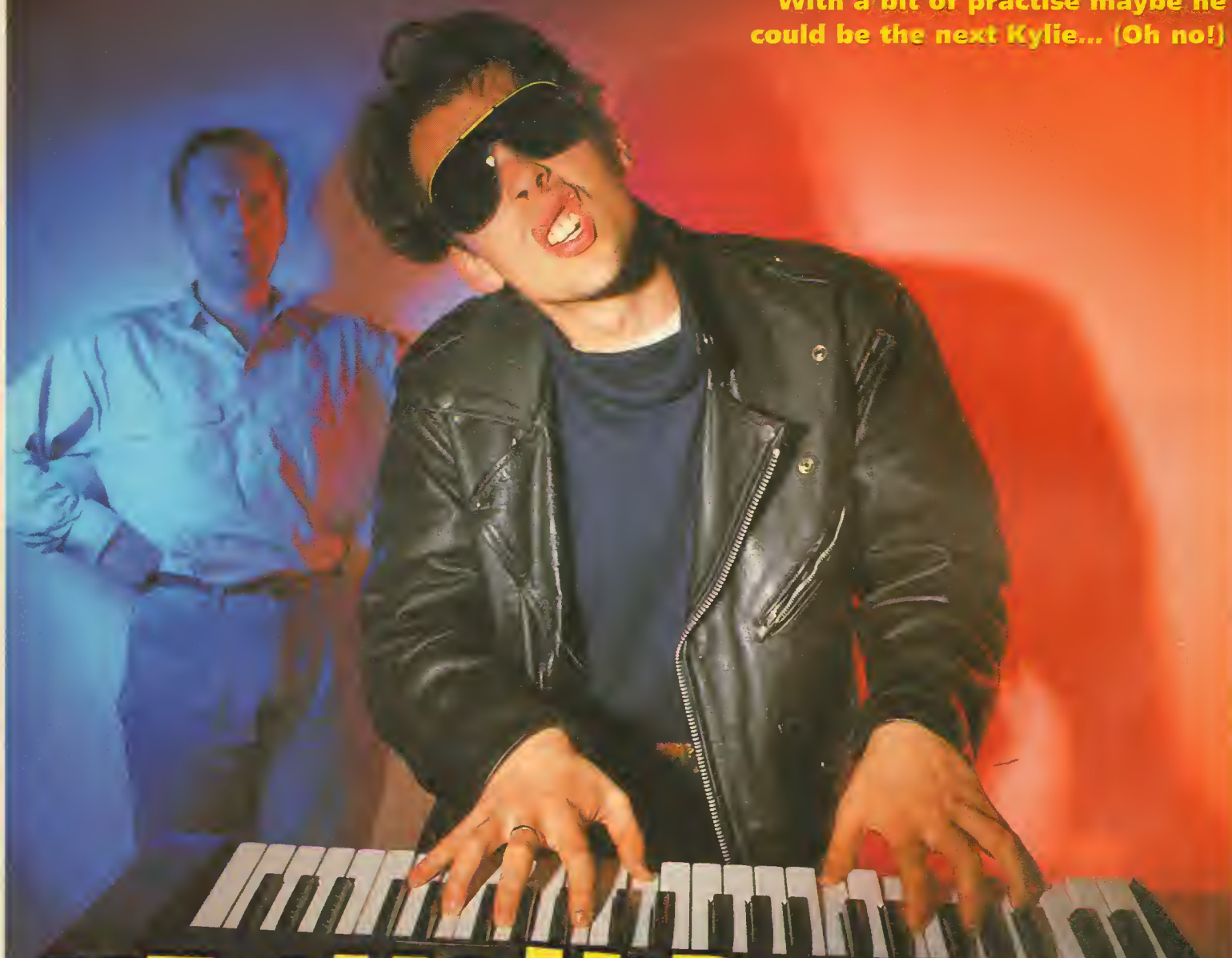


No big deal. But far worse is the lack of any decent challenge. If the task was as difficult as it is playable I'd recommend it. But it ain't, so I can't. Sorry, you'd best look elsewhere for a lasting blaster. **ANDY**

TOTAL!



Could this be the new rave of '92?
Thicky dreams of stardom - all
thanks to a new piano teaching
system which plugs into your NES.
With a bit of practise maybe he
could be the next Kylie... (Oh no!)



HE SHOULD BE SO LUCKY

(Er... lucky, lucky, lucky)



The Miracle Piano Teaching System

For **NES (and the whole family!)**

From **Mindscape**

Price **£260**

At last. Something for your NES that your mum will want you to play with. A private piano tutor in your own home - and it never loses its patience!

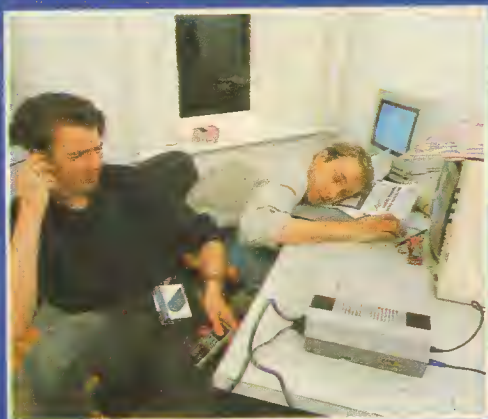
One of the nicest things about electronics is that you can plug things into other things. Not very exciting, eh? Well imagine your video not being plugged into the TV or the hi-fi not being plugged into the speakers. That would soon make things pretty boring, wouldn't it? There are more exciting combinations though, and one of the most interesting is in the world of electronic musical instruments. There

can't be very many of you reading out there who haven't heard any of the electronic music that floods the airwaves these days - except for that Shinto Priest playing with his Game Boy in a temple half way up Mount Fuji.

So all you need to create this music is a drum machine, a sampler and a synthesiser, right? Well... maybe not. It does help if you have some kind of grasp of music to begin with. How do you sort

that bit out? Well, you enroll in a piano school, don't you? That's one option, I suppose, but not really viable if you can't stand the thought of playing 'Bobby Shafto' 15 times in a row with some crusty old walrus standing over your shoulder. So what else can you do to become a keyboard maestro? Hold fast, young musician and don't fret! A solution has just arrived for your NES in the shape of The Miracle Piano Teaching System.

A star is born...



1 Another busy day in the TOTAL! office. While Steve plans the next issue, Andy listens to his favourite band on his trendy wireless headset. 'I could do that,' thinks the over-ambitious young hack. Oh dear.



2 After several second's thought, the untalented gimp 'performs' his latest ballad for the team. Steve, however, is unimpressed at being Interrupted from his important planning meeting.



3 'Look, you untalented gimp!' Exclaims Steve, 'take this new Miracle keyboard wotsit and go and learn something!' 'Hopefully he'll go and electrocute himself in the process,' thinks the evil Ed.

Music maestro

Along with the rather spiff keyboard and its various appendages, there is also another important item. A set of earphones? Er, yes, but there's something even more important – the NES cartridge with the teaching software on it. Phew! Just when you thought we were losing the Nintendo thread for a minute!

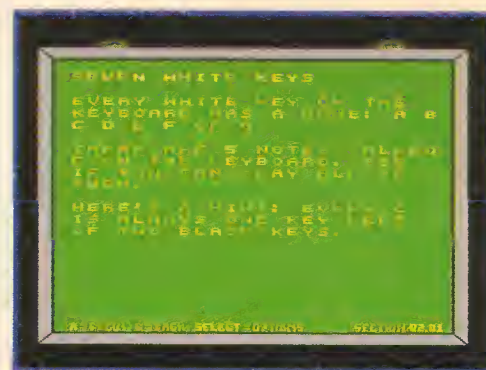
The program is a totally self-contained piano tutor, with simple exercises to get you going, games to stop you from getting bored and quizzes to test your knowledge.

The course is split into sections, each covering a main topic. For example: the first lesson simply teaches you how to hold your hand over the keyboard and what notes each finger should play. The second expands on this by giving you tunes to

play based on the simple scale outlined in section one. Once you've got the idea of this, you go on to learn rhythms and music notation. Within each section are a number of exercises which get increasingly challenging as you progress. If you don't get the hang of things, the Miracle gives you another chance and provides you with another test to try and help out.

The beauty of the system is that you can do as much or as little as you want. No sitting numb-bummed for an hour while some old flongy witters on. You can play a lesson through for five minutes – or carry on for five hours (depending on how keen you are).

Anyway, let's take a look at some of the different things you can expect to come across while learning to play the piano...



This is the chalkboard, where each lesson is explained in detail before starting you off on all those little black tadpole things. (They're notes – SJ.) Occasionally it also gives you a little quiz to test your musical knowledge (or lack of it). They're quite useful, too – I always thought quavers were those crispy things...

The package comes in a rather hefty box containing everything you need to get started, including an NES cartridge, power adaptor, leads, a foot-pedal and even a pair of earphones. But the main item is the Miracle keyboard. Usually, piano teaching systems are supplied with a rather dodgy plastic keyboard that makes a Stylophone seem technologically advanced, but this piece of gear is very whizzy. Housed in a nifty black case, the unit has a four-octave keyboard and a wide range of sound banks for you to use. For the lessons themselves one of the simpler sounds (such as a piano) is probably best, but you can select other styles of noise including jazz, rap, rock and even the ultra-trendy 'New Age'.

Once you've completed the Miracle course, you can still use the keyboard as an instrument in its own right, due to the fact that it has MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) in and out ports on the back. This means that you can connect it up to

a sequencer or other MIDI instrument to create your own potential hits. The sounds are very good indeed, rivalling some of the expensive, dedicated keyboards available. So you could be the next Jean Michel Jarre. Then again... He has been doing it for flippin' ages!

The teaching course itself is the important thing though, but this is every bit as impressive as the keyboard. The sections are organised into a very sensible structure, so that you never get too bogged down by the tedious easier lessons, but still manage to keep up with what's going on. If you do make a complete cods of the whole thing, the Miracle takes you back a couple of steps to get into the swing of things or gives you another exercise to try and sort out what's going wrong.

Whereas most piano lessons just involve being shown the notes and told how to play a piece of music, the Miracle has a much more interesting way of improving your skills. After practising a

skill, you are given a game to play to make practising less dull. The earlier sections require you to hone your timing skills, which is done by playing Roboman, whereas later, when you need to learn music notation, the Shooting Gallery comes into play (see above for explanations of the games).

Once you've mastered a section, you can go to the practise room and play a song from a pretty extensive list to give your new-found skills a trial run. These are organised so that there are tunes corresponding to the various levels of the course.

Seeing that the NES is not usually known for its educational software, releasing something like the Miracle Piano Teaching System is a brave move. Having said that it is an extremely impressive package which not only teaches the piano to a pretty proficient standard, it's also a lot of fun. If you want more from your NES than just games, then this is just the thing for you.

ANDY

TOTAL!

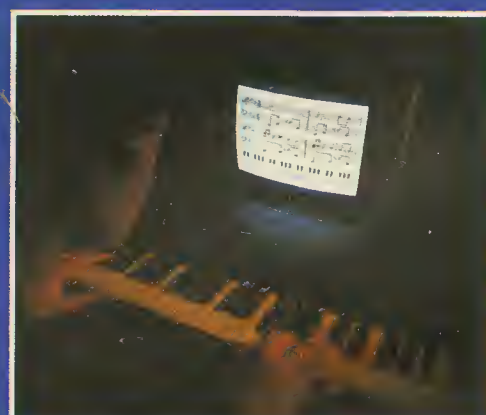
Then again... Perhaps not



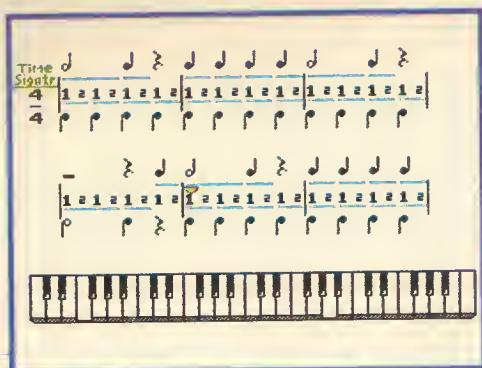
4 'Eh? What's all this squiggly stuff on the screen!?' ponders the Dim One. 'Oh... I'll never get the hang off this!' But, dim though he is, Thicky perseveres with his new piano tutor.



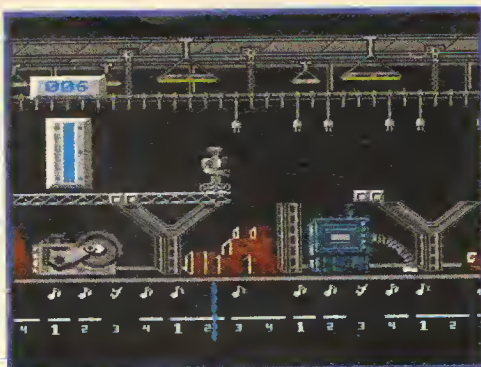
5 'Oh dear. Maybe going for Bach's Toccata And Fugue in D minor wasn't such a good idea after all. Perhaps I'd better go back to tapping the 'C' key in time to the clicky sound.'



6 Badly hampered by being deaf in one ear and having all the musical ability of a slug, Thicky practises late into the night. Gosh, he almost looks human, doesn't he readers?



Right. Off we go with a nice 'n' simple lesson. Here you just have to tap one of the keys in time with the cursor and metronome. The Miracle cart checks on how good your timing is and either congratulates you and takes you to the next lesson – or suggests politely that you do it again until you get it right (dweeb).



Once you get the hang of where the notes are, you need to be able to play them in time. In this section you must hit the notes in time to make Roboman jump up to the plugs in order to build a bridge. Jump at the wrong time and Roboman will trash his head on the ceiling. Miss too many plugs and he falls to his doom!



Okay. So you can play the right notes on the keyboard in the correct rhythm. Now it's on to the difficult stuff – reading music. In this game you must play the notes corresponding to the positions of the ducks as they glide across the musical staff. Hit the right note and poor mister ducky gets blow to smithereens. Ha!



Even once you've finished all the lessons and are proficient at tickling the ivories, you can still use the Miracle for some extra practise – or maybe for a karaoke evening! The practise room offers 36 tunes to play, complete with the Miracle orchestra as accompaniment!



Budding musicians should be able to guess which tune I've chosen just by these opening bars... No? Sheesh! It's 'Let's go Crazy' by Prince! I thought that was obvious! Anyway, before playing before a captive audience (Steve's all tied up and ready to listen) I'm practising the rhythm.



Right, now I'm ready for a full-blown recital. A-one, a-two, a-one, two... Er... Erm... (Three! – SJ.) Yeah, and off we go! (Cue utterly appalling cacophony of Dyer attempting to sing 'Let's Go Crazy' with a) the church organ sound turned on and b) absolutely no talent whatsoever.)



7 The next day, Andy returns to the office, completely transformed. 'Woah, dudes!' Cries the dweebous one. 'I'm back and ready to rock!' Steve is overjoyed to see his old pal once more. Sort of...



8 Could it be true? Could stupid-o-dim Dyer really have become the new king of rock and roll overnight!? No. He's still on lesson three, and Steve decides that the world would be a safer place if he...



9 But what's this? The world famous record producer Dusty Brackett happens to be visiting the offices and offers Andy a recording contract worth £1,000,000. Hallelujah! 'Tis a miracle!

DUCK TALES

For NES
(1 player)
From CAPCOM
Price £40

adventure and money (especially money), Scrooge sets off to recover the lot and add them to his personal fortune (*sounds a bit like scrooge, stingy bag McJarratt - Andy*). There's treasure hidden in The Amazon, Transylvania, the mines of Africa, the Himalayas and the Moon (!), so Scrooge is obviously going to



The Himalayas. Don't pogo on snow - you'll sink. Don't annoy the goats - you'll die.

Bless me bagpipes! In Duck Tales, you play Scrooge McDuck, who (according to my collection of 1972 'Donald And Mickey' comics) is Donald Duck's Scottish millionaire uncle. Old Scrooge McDuck has heard that there are five great treasures lost in various parts of the world (and beyond) so, being a lover of both

have his work cut out. Luckily, he's got his nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie to help him out, as well as various other helpful duck-type characters. And, of course, his trusty pogo stick and cane, so everything should be okay. At least, it would be if it wasn't for all the baddies who want the lost treasures to stay that way...



POGOS

Lots of graphical variety, smart sprites and some excellent sounds. Three difficulty levels aids lastability



NO-GOS

Juddery scrolling and an iffy control. Once you've mastered the controls you'll romp through it

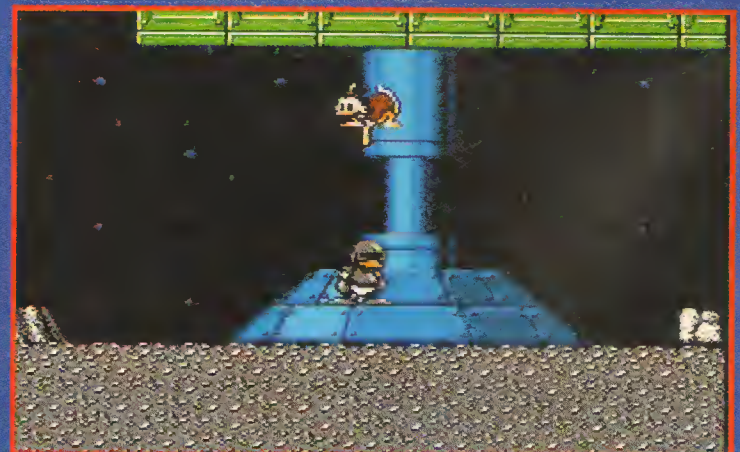
Moon mission

Each land has a different quest for Scrooge to complete. Only once he's collected one of the five lost treasures can he return home, happy, content (and rich). But while he's in each land

he'll find that there are plenty of other things to be found before he reaches the goodies. This example is taken from the Moon where someone's left a rather large UFO lying around...



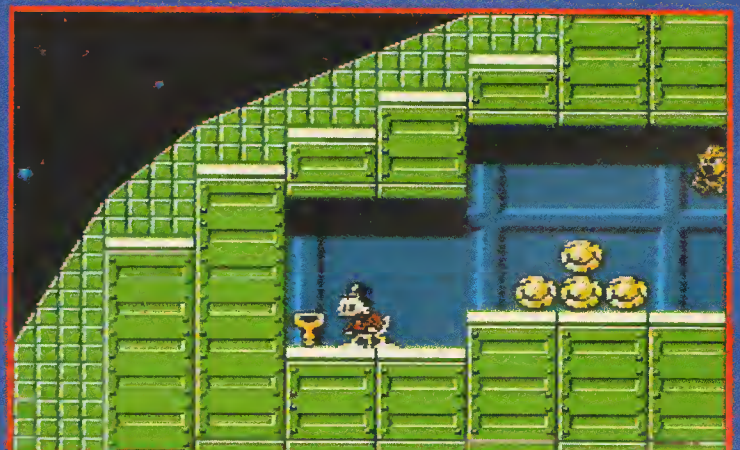
1 Choose any level you like from the map screen. The windows bottom left and right show which treasure you have to get - we're off to the moon for some green cheese!



2 I'm not sure how I got here but I'm now on the moon next to a rather large UFO. On my quest for the green cheese I'll meet loads of these iron-clad ducks so it's best if I pogo around.



3 'Hello young duck-like girlie-thing. How do I get past that door at the bottom left of the screen,' I ask. Her reply can be seen in the message window at the top. So where's the key?



4 Several squillion screens later I happen across the very key I was looking for. I s'pose you'd all like to know how I got here wouldn't you? Well, too bad. Work it out for yourselves.



Having successfully avoided the killer tulip, Scrooge McDuck launches himself off the screen in an attempt to rattle the snake.

Duck Tales scores immediately over most other running-and-jumping games by having not one but two different kinds of jumping. As well as the usual run-of-the-mill ordinary jump, Uncle Scrooge can leap onto his pogo stick and jump about twice as high as usual. Being on the pogo stick also protects our hero from deadly floor spikes and the like, and allows him to kill baddies by jumping on top of them Mario-style.

Unfortunately, to use the pogo stick you have to jump into the air, then press 'down' on the control pad and the 'B' button at the same time in the split-second before he lands. This makes using



It's tricky to pogo a ceiling-mounted bat to death (actually it's impossible). A far easier way is to launch a rock at it. Do this by hitting the boulder with your broly.



The enemies in Duck Tales are a real giggle. Kill these mummies and their bandages fly off to reveal a pathetic duck beneath!

the pogo stick a bit fiddly, and you'll get killed more than once because you couldn't quite manipulate the controls quickly enough. You can compensate a bit by altering the game's difficulty level (there are three settings) so that Uncle Scrooge can survive more impacts with the enemy characters, but it would have been better to make him more controllable so that he didn't collide with them as often. Still, practice makes perfect, and after a few games the pogo-ing soon becomes second nature.

Apart from that one initial problem, this is a fair enough variation on the old platform-leaping theme. The scenery is nicely drawn and each level has its own different style. But better still are the many characters in the game. They are all beautifully drawn and the animation at times can be hilarious. And to top it all the sound is just about right. There's a different soundtrack for each level (they're all pretty groovesome) while the sound effects are very appropriate.

But despite these nice touches, there must be dozens of this kind of Mario-type platform adventure on the NES now, so for a game to really stand out it's got to be something pretty bloomin' special. Unfortunately, this is in no way exceptional – it's just pretty good. The cutesy characters and easy gameplay mean it's more suited to the

TOTAL!

Looks



■ The sprites are well animated and some of the backdrops are nice. Glitchy though

Sounds



■ There's a different tune for each level and some very pleasing sound effects

Gameplay



■ Seems tricky to start off, but it's not. A good game for younger NES players

Life span



■ Not all that challenging. And being able to play any level takes away the mystery

Pretty playable, but you've probably already got half-a-dozen games which are almost identical. For Disney duck addicts only



Final rating
69
Percent

younger players out there, and given the current popularity of Scrooge McDuck's video adventures, this'll sell well whatever we say. But be warned, with the same price tag as Super Mario Bros 3, Duck Tales can't be considered a bargain. **STEVE**

TOTAL!

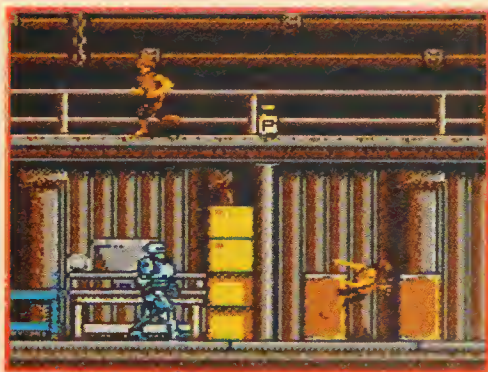
Rolling Royals



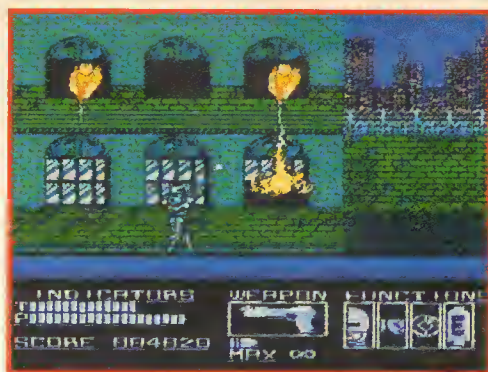
Ah-ha! I've reached the end-of-level guardian. It's a, well, Bearded orange monarch of some description. Ha! Looks like a bit of a wimp. I'll just pogo his stupid kingly brains out...



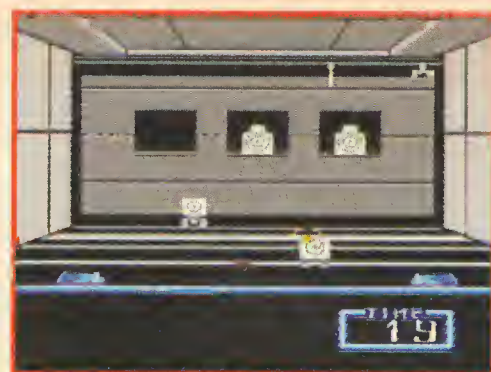
... Aaargh! How could I have been so stupid. This is the fabled spinning, bearded, orange monarch of the African mine. Best avoid him until he resumes his human form, then pogo him.



Robocop deals out some justice on level 2. The poor bloke flying through the air with 72 million rounds in him is a wanted litter-bug and known wearer of silly red hats.



'Oh, sorry hofficer. Me an' my mate were just tryin' to strip the paintwork off our windahs wiv dese industrial strength blowlamps, when you appeared. Honest.'



Early on Robocop gets bored with hunting criminals and sneaks off for a quick go on the police target range. He's always loved fairgrounds and this one's free!

ROBOCOP

**For NES
(1 player)**

From Ocean

Price £25

'ARDGUYS

Too easy, thanks to all the bonus energy pods lying about. It's a bit rough around the edges

ANDROIDS

There are plenty of different opponents to trade blows with. Varied end-of-level challenges

You've all seen the film haven't you? I must say, it was a bit gory wasn't it? All that shooting and stuff. Oh dear me no, it's not my cup of tea at all. I'm looking forward to Tiddly-Winks The Movie when it comes out.

Anyway, in short: Patrolman Murphy gets shot into a thousand pieces, so some clever boffin-types decide it would be a bit of a hoot to bung his remains into a metal suit. He then trots back into action as the powerful Robocop (minus a few emotions and the need to visit the toilet).

It's pretty standard game-of-the-film stuff. In other words it's a platform explore 'n' shoot 'em up bearing little resemblance to the film it's supposedly based on. Still, what is here is fairly neat. Each level is big with adequate graphics. The sprites are nicely animated but to be honest the backdrops are a bit messy. There's also some nice enemy weaponry to be combatted and, as is usually the

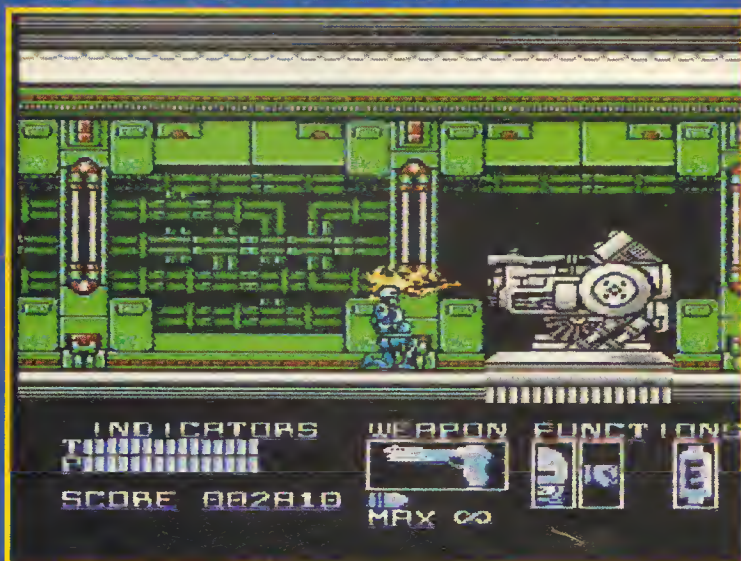
case with these games, you can always be sure of an end of level boss at... Er, the end of each level.

Initially these are goons of one description or another who fire at you or hold hostages to protect themselves. But later bosses take the form of big, bad bits of dangerous hardware including the now-famous ED-209 combat droid.

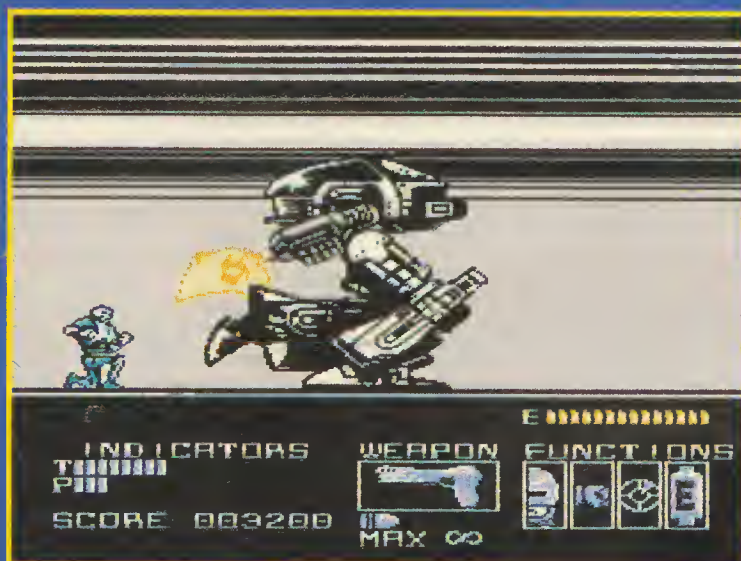
Yes, the game looks and plays fairly well – but only fairly well. There are a few niggles which spoil it somewhat. Because you can fire in eight directions, your joypad moves don't always translate into accurate aiming.

Also, there are sections in which Robo blasts his way through the opposition and others where he merely punches through the bad guys. Unfortunately the changeover is often mid-level. Why is Robocop stupid enough to put away a perfectly good gun only to use his rather puny fists? I dunno. It would have been better if you started off with just your fists and built up your stockpile of weapons as the game progressed.

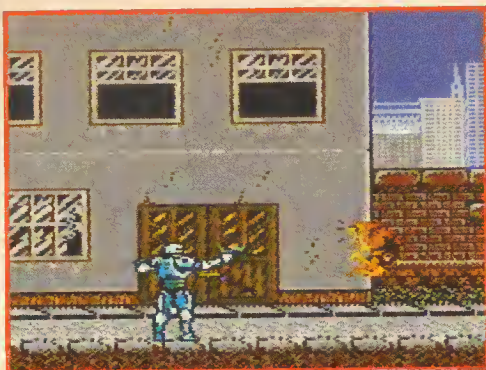
Off with his 'ED



Inside OCP's headquarters, Robo falls head-over-heels in love with this enormous flame-thrower called Clive and decides to propose on bended kn– Er, well, that's not strictly true. It is in fact a deadly device which will toast our hero unless he blasts it pronto.



Only moments later, Robo meets his first serious opposition in the shape of this ruddy great ED-209. The metal monster is armed with all sorts of devious weapons, not least of which is this spray-gun which blasts vile yellow paint over the enemy. The fiend!



When you take your job as seriously as Robocop even dogs off the leash need to be careful. Benji pays the price for crawling through a hole in the garden fence.



Even young Timmy Wilcox isn't spared the wrath of our over-keen law-enforcement officer. 'Flying a radio-controlled helicopter without a licence. You're grounded, creep!' (Dyer you are SACKED! - Steve). Er, actually Robocop battles an extremely nasty baddie in a mini attack-chopper. OK? Steve? Hello? Oh, come on, it was a joke...



Ha-haar! This'll slow the thick Robo-dweeb down a bit!



six levels in a few hours. No? I thought not. Well this is exactly the problem with Robocop.

It's all a bit weird because while you're actually playing the game it feels really difficult - in fact in some places it's so hard it gets frustrating. But then it doesn't take you too long to suss out what the problem is, and before you know it, you've romped through three or four levels.

And even though the levels appear to be pretty long, it only takes a few minutes to get through each one. Once you've mastered it, the entire game only lasts half an hour or so.

Loathed as I am to say it, you're probably better off leaving Robocop alone. It's good fun to play, but it's the sort of thing you'd enjoy most if you borrowed it off your mate for a couple of days. If

TOTAL!

Looks



Great animation on Robo, and some impressive bits, like the massive ED-209

Sounds



Naff version of the movie's theme tune, and the blasting sounds are lame too

Gameplay



Jolly walk 'n' blast fare, slightly marred by a finicky control method

Life span



It's too easy - only the last few levels are going to put up much of a struggle

A fun stomp 'n' blast 'em up with heaps of action and some nice visuals. Unfortunately it's too easy and could really do with a bit more variety

Final rating
66
Percent



you actually had to fork out for it yourself, it might leave you feeling a little bit robbed.

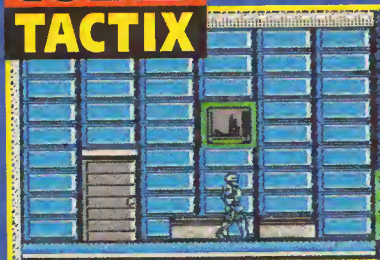
ANDY

TOTAL!

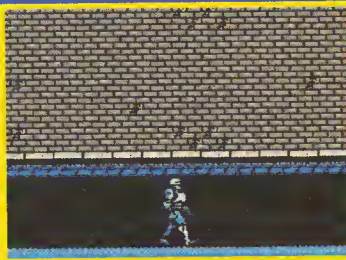
Short-cuts and shoot-outs

TOTAL!
TACTIX

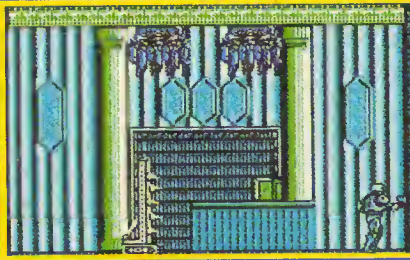
On level 2 - City hall - Robo is sent to deal with a disgruntled employee (he's had his gruntles removed). The poor chap has flipped his bonnet and is holding the mayor hostage. This involves a lot of people-shooting and stair-climbing so why not take the short-cut? Allow me to elucidate (you do and you can clear it up afterwards - Steve).



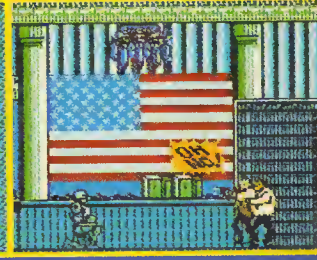
1 Stomp through the first corridor and then climb the stairs. Enter the first door on the right and move right. The bit of flashing wall is actually not as strong as it should be, I mean, look, it's paper thin, ooh you can hear the neighbours' telly and - Ahem. Smash it with your fists...



2 ... Then stroll through the secret tunnel. Er, there's not really much to say about this bit. It's dark and long and very tunnelly. As you can see, Robo is walking along it and, erm, any minute now he'll come out in another room. Like...



3 ... This one! Just like the first room, this has a bit of wall which flashes to show that Robo can punch his way through. However, unlike the first room, this one also has a big spikey plank on wheels which threatens to puncture our hero. Luckily it's too slow to be of any real harm.



4 And here we are in the mayor's office. If Robo isn't careful he hits the mayor (erm, like I have here). You must duck, wait for the kidnapper to shoot, then stand and fire. Repeat until the mayor is released, then kill the blokey. Ha!

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

TROUBLE ON BLOBOLONIA



LADDERS

The way you have to transform Blob to get past hazards is a brilliant idea. Some of the scenery is wonderful. Massive play area to explore



HOLES

Too much wandering - you can travel for screens only to find you have to go all the way back because it's a dead end. Let's face it, there's not much action!



Scientists all over the world have tried to imagine how life would develop on other planets, and what alien beings might look like. Some believe that they'll be a cross between reptiles and human beings. Others think they'll be large and green. Some have even suggested that they'll be made up of pure energy and nothing else. But oddly enough the only person who even came close to getting it right was one Albert Brinstead who, after sneezing violently into his handkerchief, looked at the contents and exclaimed, 'Ooh flippin 'eck! It looks like an alien life form!'.

A Boy And His Blob is all about one of these snot-like aliens called Blobert. His home planet Blobolonia has been taken over by an evil Emperor who makes everyone eat nothing but marshmallows and chocolate (apparently vitamins are poisonous to him - a bit like Baghead who exists tirelessly on cans of Coke).

So the distressed Blob has come to earth and teamed up with a young boy called, er... Boy, in a



To collect underwater treasure, Boy feeds his chum a Cola-flavoured jellybean and climbs inside the bubble-shaped Blob.

bid to save his blobby brethren from a fate worse than malnutrition.

Our hero is a clever lad and sets about completing the task by collecting money (in the form of treasure and jewels) to buy vitamins with

which to poison the Emperor. He's also discovered that feeding the Blob jellybean sweets transforms the fat fellow into various objects which help him on his mission. There are 15 different jellybeans each of which transform Blob into a different 'thing'. Licorice beans turn him into a ladder for reaching the unreachable; vanilla turns him into an umbrella so that long falls don't hurt the boy; punch-flavoured beans punch holes in platforms for the boy to fall through, and so on.

The game actually takes place over two levels. Level one is on earth where boy and Blob hunt through streets and underground caverns for money to buy vitamins. Once they've amassed a large enough fortune, they can purchase some vitamin pills, and set off for Blobolonia to seek out the evil Emperor.

Although there are two characters you only have to control the boy: Blob just follows you around. However, Blob is pretty slow-moving so once in a while he gets left behind. Don't worry, the boy only has to stop and blow a whistle and

Altered beast

To show you just how exciting A Boy And His Blob can be, we've joined three action-packed screens together to describe how the Blob does his thing...



To reach the shinies up on this ledge, it's just a matter of lobbing a licorice jellybean in the direction of the Blob.

Want to get somewhere? Then you're going to have to walk. There's an awful lot of 'walking about' in A Boy And His Blob.

No stairs? Easy. Pop a Punch-flavoured jellybean in Blob's gob, and Boy can drop down through the platform!

TOTAL!

100% FOR NINTENDO PLAYERS

SPECIAL
PULL-OUT
POSTERS





MIND
YE
STEP

TOTAL!

SPECIAL
PULL-OUT
POSTERS

100% FOR NINTENDO PLAYERS



**WIN ISSUE
ONE'S COVER
ARTWORK!**

Yes indeedy! We had this colourful masterpiece painted especially for our first issue. We found the original lying under a desk the other day, so we've scraped the food off, slapped it in a posh frame and have decided to give it away to one of our beloved readers (that's you). To win this painting (sorry about Thicky and Misery Guts) we want you to draw a picture of Baghead - without his bag! Yep, we want you to show us just why you think Baghead has to keep his mush covered up. Let your imagination run riot, then send your piccy in to: Baghead Revealed! TOTAL!, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. Get it to us before February 20, otherwise you'll miss the grand judging ceremony. OK?





Blob suffers serious side-effects of eating jellybeans of different flavours. **1** Licorice turns him into a ladder. **2** Honey turns him into a hummingbird. **3** Coconut turns him into a

coconut. **4** Cinnamon turns him into a blow-lamp. **5** Strawberry turns him into a bridge. **6** Punch turns him into an umbrella. **8** Tangerine turns

him into a trampoline. **9** Cola turns him into a bubble. **10** Root beer turns him into a jack. **11** Apple turns him into a brick wall! **12** If you make him eat ketchup

the jellied japester quickly catches up.

Sometimes the boy can move onto a platform which the Blob can't reach. Just when it looks like the end of a beautiful relationship, the boy can lob a ketchup jelly bean and the Blob reappears. (Geddit? Ketchup. Catch-up. Yes, well.)

One of the problems with this game is that the play area is so big, and yet so empty. In the whole of level one there are only three different types of hazard (other than the problem of finding your way around). There's an indestructible serpent, falling rocks and deadly stalactites and stalagmites. Even these are spread pretty thinly so there's not a lot of action.

On top of that, both the boy and Blob's progress is painfully slow. It can be really annoying

to find yourself in a dead end after plodding through half-a-dozen empty screens.

These problems prove even more painful when you know that the author, David Crane, was writing the same sort of game eight years ago (anyone remember Pitfall on the C64?). You'd have thought he would have got it right by now!

No, if you want thrills and spills you'd better look elsewhere because this is an exploration game played at the pace of a chess match between two dim sloths. The shape-changing Blob is a stroke of genius and the visuals aren't bad but there isn't enough action to distract you from the seriously repetitive gameplay. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

Looks



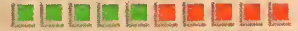
■ A few tidy backdrops and some neat animation on boy and Blob - that's it

Sounds



■ Good whistling effect but the soundtrack is seriously brain-damaging!

Gameplay



■ Not an awful lot really. There's too little to do, and too much room to do it in

Life span



■ You could spend weeks exploring and map-making - if boredom doesn't set in

It's a shame to criticise a game so full of original ideas, but there's too much wandering around and not enough action. It does get dreadfully dull



Reptiles and rockfalls



This is as busy a screen as you'll ever see in this game. Look, it's got you, a snake *and* some treasure in it... Well, Hallelujah! The beasts are invincible so you'll need to float down through the gap with your broly and find another route to the treasure.



Just like real life, the only way to avoid being crushed by a massive rockfall is to put your broly up. Don't run through these screens - you're bound to hit a boulder and snuff it. That's it really... Not much you can say about a game as action-free as this.

ROLLERGAMES

For NES (1 player)

From Konami

Price £40

Now we've had our fair share of odd storylines, but this is a beaut! The 21st century's popular sport, RollerGames, is under threat from the VIPER organisation (which stands for Vicious International Punks and Eternal Renegades, would you believe).

These evil-doers have infiltrated the ranks of RollerGames teams, converting

three of them to their heinous cause. The 'bad' skaters in these teams have kidnapped the RollerGames' commissioner, 'Skeeter' Bankhead, and are holding him to ransom. The only way to

save the future of the 'Games is to go and bust some VIPER butt! (Er... That's Roller-speak for hitting people.)

The mission is split up into six stages with 12 different areas, most of which scroll in eight directions so you can move where you like. However, there are also two auto-scrollers which move continuously from right to left. Here you just have to avoid the obstacles and baddies which get in your way. At the end of each area there are fight scenes where you have to defeat a bunch

of VIPERS, some of the bad-guy RollerGamers and the occasional guardian boss-man.

You can pick your skater from three teams, the T-Birds, Hot Flash or the Rockers. The guy from the T-Birds is Ice Box, a porky chap in a fetching blue outfit. The Hot Flash skater is Rolling Thunder, a girlie in a pink suit. And the Rockers offer California Kid, a hunky bloke dressed in



SKATERS

Massive play areas with wonderful graphics throughout. Your skaters are really well animated with lots of moves



BIKERS

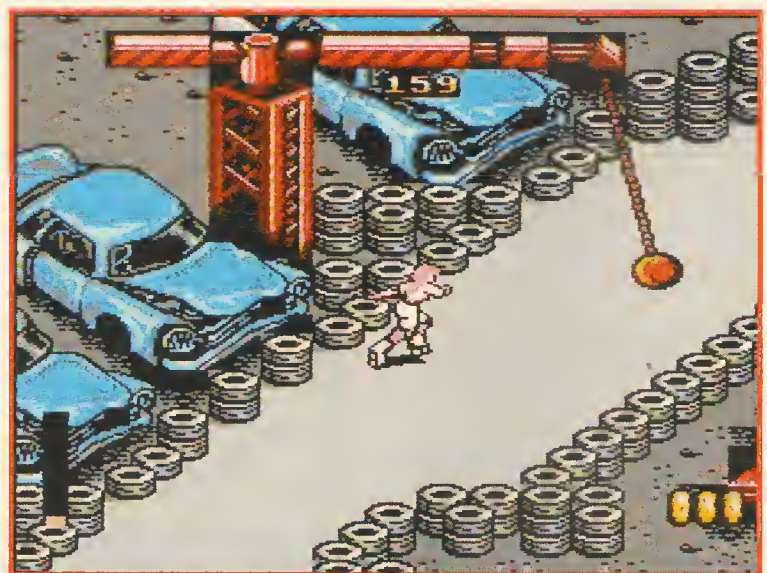
Sometimes the enemy can be miles away and still score a hit. When you die, you have to replay the entire area



You get plenty of opportunity to practice your duffing up technique. Here the 'Kid pummels a VIPER during the skate section...



... And now he's laying waste to some more in an end-of-level punch-out. The blokey in grey is a Boss who throws a fit!



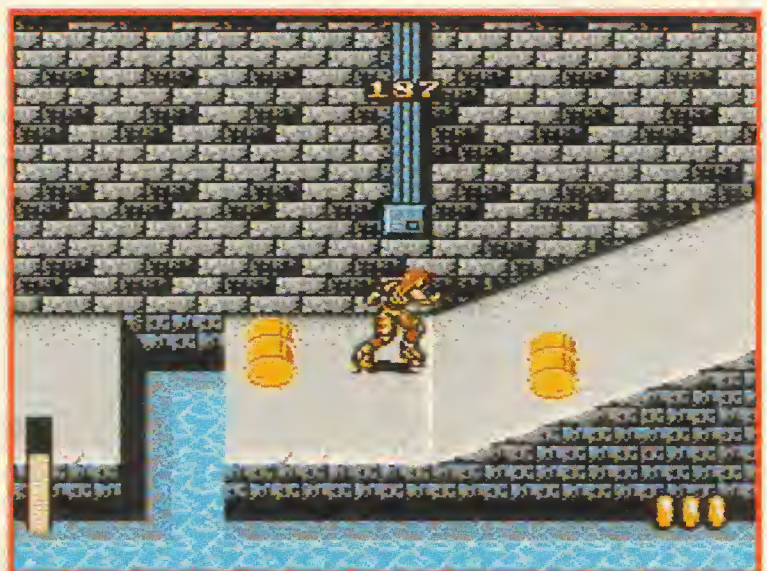
Our glamorous heroine, Rolling Thunder, skates through the car park of the 'Thicky Dyer Driving Academy'. Here you can see his specially designed apparatus to practise dodging pedestrians.

Bomb scare

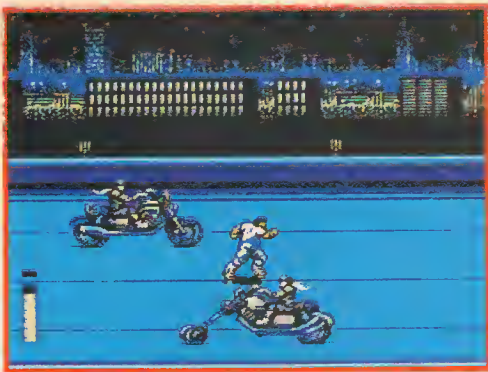


TOTAL!
TACTIX

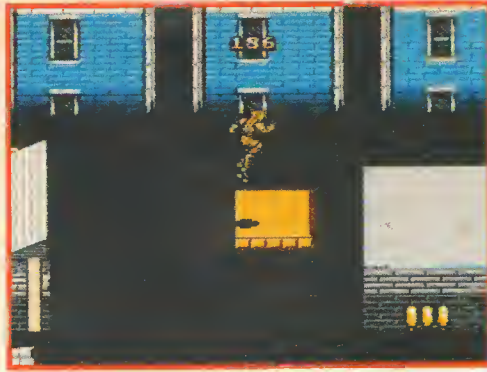
At the end of the auto-scrolling Night Highway stage (area 3) you meet this rather large attack chopper thingy. You can't kill it, but it can certainly do you in a treat as it drops huge amounts of bombs. To survive this section stand you skater where fatty Ice Box is in the screen-shot, then just jump over the explosions as they approach from the right. There - simple, but incredibly effective.



These rolling oil barrels are surprisingly tricky to avoid. In fact, most of the time I just pile straight into them. Later on, they just lie on the side of the track and puke oil at you. Bleargh.



Rather than take on the VIPERs single-handed, tubby old Ice Box has scarpered. Here he is heading north on the M6.



That gold platform looks dodgy, dunnit? Just hanging in mid-air like that. As you'd expect, it drops like a brick when touched.

orange. Each skater moves differently and has different attack moves for dealing with VIPERs – for instance, Rolling Thunder can jump further than the blokeys and is better at the flying kick.

Each skater also has a Patented Punishment Technique, which can be used during the end-of-level punch-out. Ice Box, for example, performs a flying body slam (and he's a real fatty, so watch out VIPERs!). The enemy have little defence against these manoeuvres, but they can only be used three times in each area, so it's best to save them for the end-of-area rumble.

You can pick a new skater at the start of each stage, and the hazards you encounter are best suited to just one of them – you'll soon learn which skater to choose for each stage.

I can't say I'm too distressed about having to play this one. It's a bit on the odd side for sure, but once you get into it, there's lots of variety and plenty of action. The control can be slightly fiddly

at first, but there's enough nasty jumps and bumps to test your reflexes and lots of face-punching and body-pounding to get your teeth grinding.

There's an annoying problem with the sprite collision detection (the thing which decides when your skater hits another character or bit of scenery). Once or twice I plopped down a hole or fell over an oil can when I really wasn't that near. Get a few bad calls on the trot and Mr Frustration soon comes visiting!

I breezed through the first four areas, but just when I thought it was going to be a doddle, things started to get flippin' tough. You always restart from the beginning of the area which can be a drag, but you do have infinite continues, so you can keep playing the same area until you crack it. Hardened NES gamers will probably finish it sooner than later, but I think RollerGames is wheely good. (Sorry.)

STEVE

TOTAL!

Looks



Skaters move really well, and the huge colourful backdrops scroll smoothly

Sounds



Fistfuls of funky tunes backed up by some suitably punchy sound effects

Gameplay



The blend of platform and combat action is fast, varied and entertaining

Life span



12 big areas should keep your wheels rolling for a couple of weeks at least

Double Dragon on wheels, with smart scenery and great animation. Good mix of hazard-jumping and people-punching which you'll keep coming back to



Final rating
72
Percent!



Air styles

Hee hee! See if you can break the land speed record – twonk!



WAAAAAAAAAAAA



Flippin' 'eck! How do you brake? Steer? Stop? Slow down?

At the end of each stage (and when you lose all three lives) you can choose a new skater from the three good teams. Each one has different skating characteristics and performs different attack moves, including their combat speciality – the PPT or Patented Punishment Technique! (Yeah, I think it sounds naff, too.)



No fancy moves for fatty Ice Box – he just blats them with a blubber body-slam. Squelch city!



Rolling Thunder favours a cartwheeling drop-kick to disable her enemies!



The California Kid performs a headache-making high scissor-kick to destroy the opposition!



WHICH TEAM DO YOU WANT TO JOIN?



LOW G MAN

For NES (1 player)

From Nintendo/
Taxan Group

Price £25

In 292 year's time something vile is going to happen. I know this not because I have the ability to look far into the future but because it says so in the Low G Man instruction booklet. By all accounts, the people on earth are going to build a large computerised factory on a distant planet. This factory will build robots, and in the year 2284 a nasty group of aliens will take over, reprogram the production line and produce a bucket load of war robots with the sole intention of wiping out the human race. Oh deary me.

Enter the hero, and the character you play, Low G Man. You're a warrior who can leap about a lot and spear things with your speary thing. This is just as well, because the factory planet is absolutely choc-a-block with

dangerous battle droids who only understand the language of the feared speary thing.

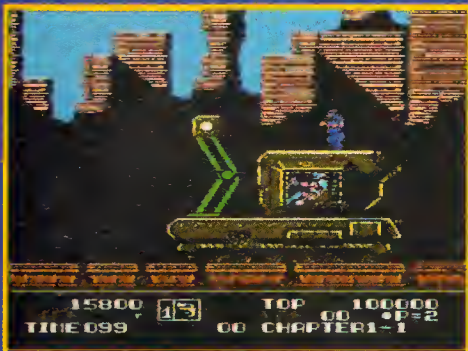
But I'm simplifying things a bit. One of the reasons this game is so good is that there's a bit of strategy involved. As well as the speary you have a gun which temporarily freezes the robots. The easiest and safest way to dispose of these opponents is to first immobilise them with your gun, leap onto their backs then shove a spear through them. This is sensible during the early stages of the game because you're less likely to get hurt.

However, robots give power ups when you kill them. This is no bad thing but they give more power-ups if you manage to kill them without freezing them first. So when you get a bit better at controlling Low G Man it's best to steer clear of using the gun, that way you can get maximum weaponry faster. There are also four collectable weapons other than your gun, which come in handy for killing opponents that might otherwise avoid your spear-prodding attempts.

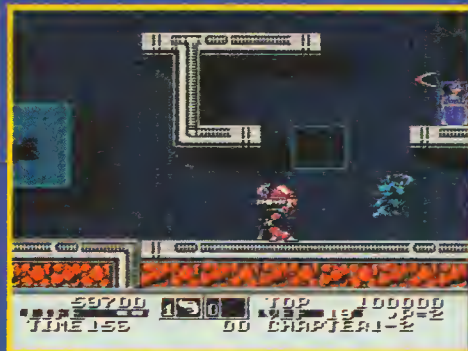
Now, the reason that you (as Low G Man) have been given the job of destroying the aliens is that you're so good at moving around. But sometimes, just sometimes, your gravity-defying talents are not enough. This is when you can make use of one of three vehi-

LOW G MEN
Wonderfully vast levels, all of which are beautifully drawn. Brilliant password option. Really original weapons and combat methods

NO G MEN
Well, we thought and thought, but just couldn't come up with anything. Sorry guys, but it looks like Low G Man is a pretty stonking game!



'I'd like a large 99 with chocco topping please... WAAARGH! Okay, okay I'll have raspberry sauce instead.' Silly old Low G Man. Fancy mistaking this heavily armed battle vehicle for a Mr Whippy van.



Having obtained the two-legged walker, Low G Man trots off to Toys 'R' Us to buy several Boomerangs and the new life-sized Barbie-doll-in-a-box. (Actually it's the deadly Overhand and a hostage - SJ.)



Oh dear! Low G Man leaves a bit to be desired in the fashion stakes. Not only does he wear sleeveless shirts, he also drives around in a Sinclair CS. Still, it does soak up a lot of enemy abuse.

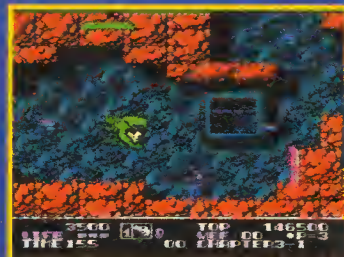
Men and machines



This nest of robots is one of the end-of-level-challenges. Take out the ones on the right and top left with any collected weapons, then spear the egg.



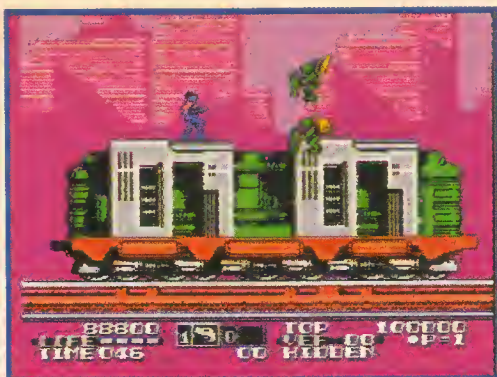
The spider vehicle is a right giggle because it enables you to walk on ceilings. (Great as long as Low G Man doesn't fall out and smash his head in.)



As you can see, this robot head shoots two walls of energy vertically and horizontally. Kill him, and this mega-weapon is all yours.



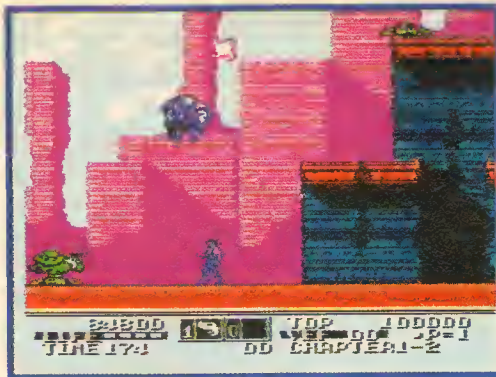
The spooky Spiron may look a bit fearsome but he's actually very easy to beat. Shoot him a few times to freeze him, then spear him up the coil (nasty).



This train-thing is a bonus stage from level two. Once you've found it (using the two-legged walker) you can set about killing these little demons for loads of bonus items.

cles in the game. These vehicles are initially used by aliens but stun them, give 'em a quick prod and the delightful transportational devices are yours. There's a two-legged walker which can perform mind-bogglingly high leaps, a spaceship which, while rather slow, does soak up an awful lot of hits and is free of the effects of gravity. And finally there's the spider vehicle which can walk and jump around on both the floor and ceiling.

If all this fancy gadgetry sounds a bit over the top let me put your mind at rest – you're gonna need it. If not for the dozens of monsters and robots that inhabit each vast (and we mean truly vast) level, then for each of the 14 ingenious and terrifying end-of-level guardians. And I'm not just plucking descriptive words like 'terrifying' from thin air just for the sake of it. These guys really are scary. Even the smaller foes like the Archnoid



It's best to use your gun on the green leapers because they tend to home in on you. The multi-headed blue thing though, just moves in big circles so you can spear it from below.

or the underwater Spiron are bad enough with their excessive firepower and their whizzo movement patterns. But it's the huge mechanised horrors like the Supersub (a mini level all of it's own), the Supertank and the Mothership that really put the wind up you. It's not only the fact that they're powerful, they're big too – several screens big in fact.

But my wobbling is going to have to stop right here for fear I should fill up the mag. If you want to know any more about the game you'll have to buy it, and let me say now you'd be a complete berk not to. It's huge, it's playable, it's challenging, it's ingenious, it's original, it's beautifully designed, it's great looking and it's totally, totally compulsive. Right, now get lost, I'm off to kick more ro-bottom. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

Looks



■ Gorgeous backdrops and stunning sprites, and there's so much variety

Sounds



■ Frantic soundtracks and meaty effects add to the game's fast paced action

Gameplay



■ It's fast 'n' furious. You can really thrash out your frustrations on this one

Life span



■ Early levels are easy enough to keep you playing, but overall challenge is awesome

Even when there was loads of work to be done I just couldn't tear myself away from this one. It shines in every single department. Wowzer!



Final rating
94
Percent

Oh no! It's the big tank!



Not so much a Supertank as a rampaging metal Christmas tree. There are four different screens here, all joined together so you can see the whole... Er... Thing.

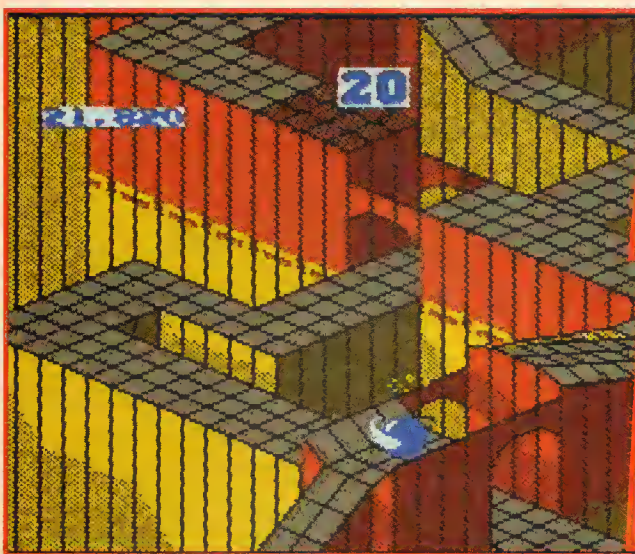
Here's a rather nasty cannon. Best go and spear it if I were you

This is a missile-gobbing gun turret. Like the cannon, it does untold damage to Low G Men, so destroy it as quickly as you can

This is the driver. Once all the tank's weapons have been destroyed it's time to pay Mister Greenie a call (and don't forget to take your spear with you)

These big octagonal things release huge, nasty spikey ball-snake devices. Do try and stay away, lest you get horribly punctured

Ah-hah! There's another gun turrety-thing hiding away down here. This one needs a good spearing too!



MARBLE MADNESS

For NES
(1-2 players)

From Milton Bradley/Rare

Price £40

Balls! There, said it. Go on then, have a good giggle at that word, get it out of your systems. That's it. Now perhaps we can get on with this review without sniggering each time I say balls... Oh, give me strength. The reason I'm going to have to say it a lot is because you play a small ball (or marble). What you have to do is guide this little glass globe around a series of aerial obstacle courses.

There are only six levels (the secret seventh one has been left

out) which is a bit of a con because the first two are short and easy and the rest will only take a couple of days to finish. Oh dear, not much point in carrying on. I seem to have dug a grave for it already. But no! There are some redeeming features: for one thing it's as close to the original

coin-op as you're likely to get on an NES (and that's pretty darn close). And if you liked the gameplay on the original you'll love this - it's identical!

Now I could go into great detail about how you control the ball but it would be pointless. You move like a ball, a real ball. You use the joystick to get the thing rolling in the direction you want and can get extra umph by pressing the A button. The only thing to remember is that if you want to double back on yourself it takes

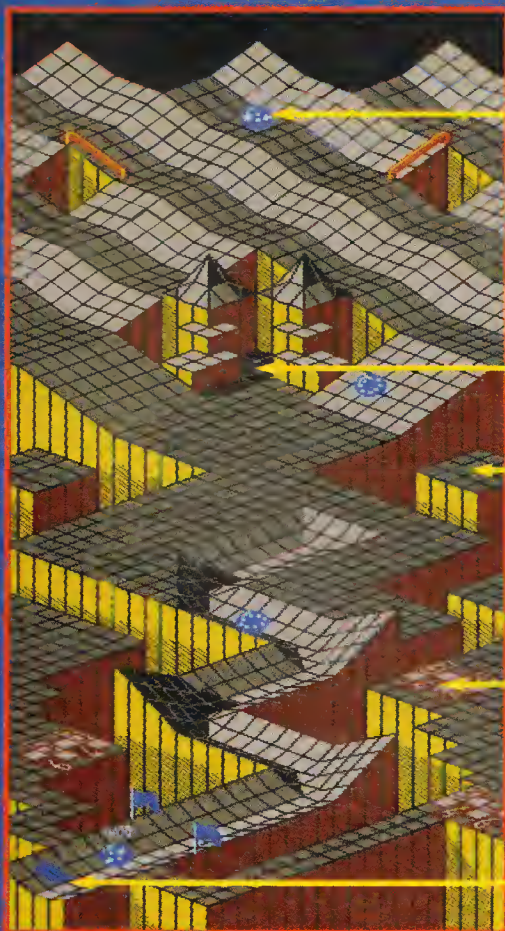


ROLLERS
Graphics are spot on and the gameplay is just like the original. Movement of the ball is pretty realistic with good control



PLUMMETERS
There are only six levels so it ain't gonna last long. The two player race option doesn't really work

Roll on level one



This is the roly-spiny marble thing that you try to control. It's about as easy to control as a plate of peas on a ship during a really heavy storm with only one chopstick and both arms tied behind your back with barbed wire whilst blindfolded and... (OK! STOP NOW! I can't take anymore - Steve.)

Ooh! A dark and mysterious place!

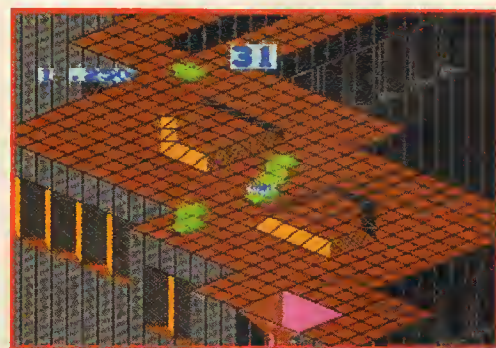
I know this looks like a nice place to stop for a breather but it's impossible to get off so stay away.

Number tiles. What do you mean, what are they for? Well, you can drop onto them, er, nip round the side to the finish line then er... Oh, it's a fair cop! I don't actually know what they do.

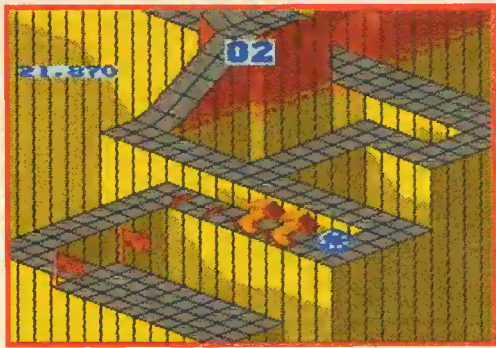
The goal! Try to get here as quickly as possible. And remember, pressing button A speeds up your ball.



Level one is just a practice level. As soon as you get into level two the hazards are introduced. These wormy things slink around the screen in a pretty harmless way. Get too close, though, and they leap high into the air, then drop down and eat you.



Oh dear, has someone let an aged dog loose in here? No. These puddles of liquid aren't what they look like. They are, in fact, deadly pools of living acid. Come into contact with them - like I have here - and your ball dissolves, wasting valuable time.



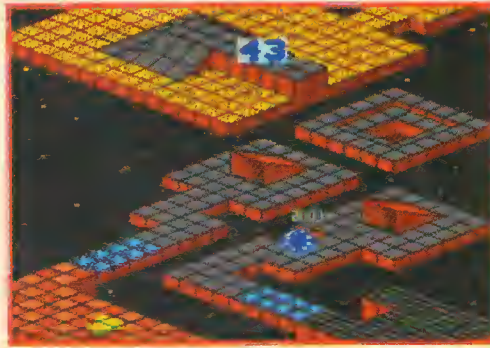
The area marked by the flags is the finish line. That's why the dastardly programmers have placed a row of pounding hammers just in front of it. They're hard to get past, but if you hang around a while and learn their movement pattern you'll be okay.

a bit of time to cancel out your inertia – there's no stopping dead in this game.

Of course it would all be rather easy if you simply had to roll around a flat surface, so the courses have been made ridiculously hilly. This has an undesirable effect on your ball-rolling antics: for instance, if you travel down steep slopes (which often lead to bottomless chasms) the ball speeds up, so you need to slowly edge down slopes by pushing in the opposite direction.

There are also a number of jumps to be made. The ball itself can't jump over gaps but there's usually a ramp (or catapult) nearby so you need to get a good run up (or roll up) to clear it. Again, this is made easier by hitting button A for that extra burst of speed.

Do you remember that rhyme, 'Nobody likes me, everybody hates me, think I'll go and eat worms'? Well that's been turned on its head in this game 'cos this time the worms eat you. These funny green tubular things flic-flac around like a



The sixth and final level. Not only are the walkways separated by large areas of nothingness, it's also full of ice patches, deadly creatures and disappearing walkways. Even so, it'll only take a few days at most to master the whole game. Shame, really...

slinky spring. If you get too close they leap high into the air, open their mouths wide and pounce on you. Bye-bye ball.

However, these are one of the easiest hazards to avoid. Worse still are the living acid pools which squelch about in close formation. If you touch them you melt into a pile of nothingness. The only way to avoid them is, er, to avoid them. Actually, the avoiding tactic is best employed against all the moving hazards in the game. This isn't a sophisticated beat 'em or shoot 'em up, it's a roll-along-and-avoid 'em up.

I've already said that this is as close a coin-op conversion as you're going to get on the NES so does that make it a must? Not really. If you're the sort of Marble Madness freak who collapses with excitement every time you see this game in an arcade then go for it. Unfortunately, for everyone else there's just not enough here to keep you going. There are too few levels and to be fair the simple gameplay is showing it's age a bit now.

TOTAL!

Looks



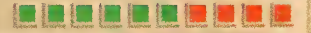
■ Yummy-yum-yum-yum! A scrumbly-wumbly graphical feasty-type thing

Sounds



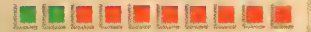
■ Some great soundtracks and a couple of rather appalling ones. Good FX though

Gameplay



■ Tricky to rate this. It's just like the original but it's all a bit dated and dull now

Life span



■ It's a breeze. It just starts to get tricky enough on the last level. Tragically short

A dead-smart conversion of the arcade classic. But with only six rather easy levels, there's barely enough to even whet your appetite



Final rating
56
Percent

Marble Madness is an excellent version of an excellent – but extremely old – game.

ANDY

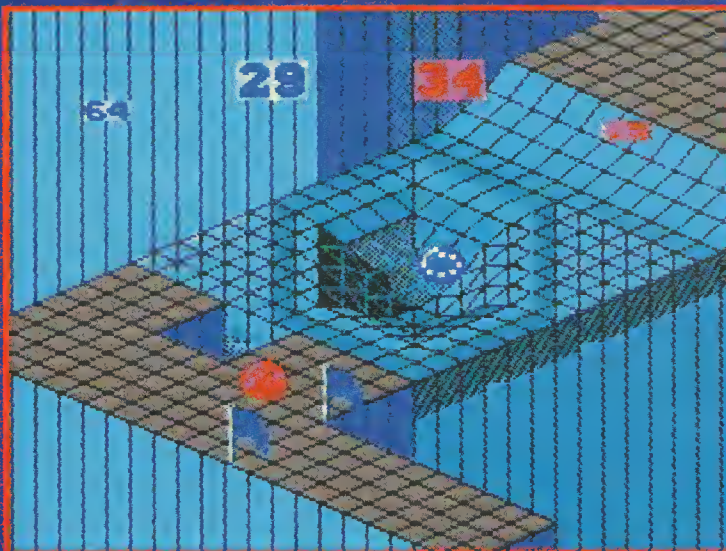


Er... Andy? I've started coming over all spherical!

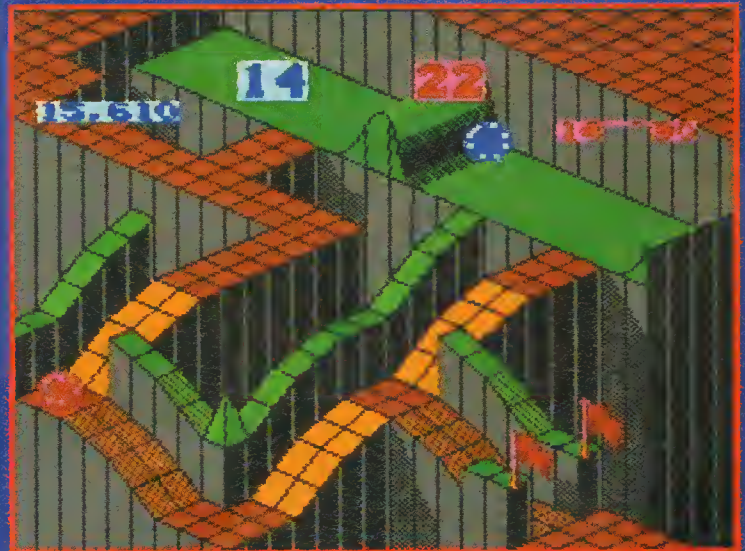


Roller balls

Naah... You're just the same as always you old fat-head



Ah wonderful, here you see me thrashing the pants of Stinge Bag. He seems completely unable to negotiate that gravity well thing in the middle. Oh dear, what a terrible tragedy (snigger!).



Hmm... Next level and I've still not managed to shake the Old Geek off. He's decided (quite stupidly) to take the big green wave machine, while I employ the more sensible (but slower) route.

SKI OR DIE

For NES (1-2 players) From Palcom/Konami Price £40

After the almost unbearable excitement of Skate Or Die comes the follow up, Ski Or Die. And if the title sounds totally unoriginal just wait until you see the game.

Yes, here we have a severe case of same old rubbish and only slightly different packaging. The game opens with the menu screen – or rather the ski shop. It looks almost exactly the same as the skate shop from Skate Or Die surprisingly enough.



In the Acro Jump your skier leaps into the air and throws a wobbler. Here we've captured three, er, manoeuvres in one shot.

And guess what? There are several options such as look at high score, sign in, compete and practice. And of course from here you can take part in five different events.

Well so far the programmers haven't had to do any real programming at all. They've just taken Skate or Die and changed the graphics. But, this is where it changes. Fortunately the events in his game are significantly different from those in its



You probably can't tell, but in the Half Pipe event your skier hurtles along a 3D ditch. Watch out for chainsaw-wielding bunnies (!).

UPPERS

Tricky. But if this game has something in its favour it's some neat animation, especially in the Acro Jump event

DOWNERS

Where do I start? The gameplay is much the same as Skate or Die. The graphics and sound are average and the events are dull, dull dull

predecessor so with any luck it'll be an improvement. Ho-hum! If only that were true. It's slightly better in that there are no really weak events but the gameplay is just the same... Tedious.

Possibly the most exciting event is the Downhill ski. After dropping forcefully onto a mountaintop you proceed down the winding slope, passing flags as you go. Unfortunately the snow has fallen a little unevenly and there are gaping snowless



You saw this twerp in Skate Or Die, last issue. Now he's back again, dressed even more ludicrously and saying even gimpier things.

Snow business



Well, you've done it this time haven't you? You went and built a snow fort and then, being a bit of a big-mouth, challenged all the kids in the entire neighbourhood to a snow fight. What a berk. Well, you may as well take a few of them with you. To throw snowballs you target the crosshair with the joypad, and hit button B to chuck. Since you're surrounded, you have to switch your view (N, S, E and W) by pressing A and moving the joypad.



Occasionally some brave little kid sneaks up on you, leaving you no option but to blat him right in the mush. Ha-haar! To win the battle you have 200 snowballs and must hit 50 kids. You then move on to the next level, where you face even more severe snowpower. The little figure shows how badly snowed-up you're becoming and the compass shows where the enemy are: at the moment there are five sneaking up on your west flank!

stretches which cause you to tumble onto your rear end. However, you can jump these obstacles, and others such as houses, by pressing button A. Completing the course quickly gets you a whooping speed bonus.

The prize for second most interesting event goes to the Acro Jump. This is a sort of airborne freestyle jobby. Launch yourself from an enormous ramp and perform various snazzy manoeuvres by wobbling the joystick about. If you land properly the judges appear and award points.

Next comes the Snowball Blast. In this event you sit inside a circular wall of ice blocks. Young kiddies appear around you and pelt you with snowballs. You have a limited amount of time to hit a specified number of the brats with snowballs of your own. You can pick up extra balls and bonus points by shooting other strange creatures that appear from time to time.

The most boring, annoying event is the Inner



Oooh look! The menu screen. So much choice, so little fun to be had. Play the events individually or one after the other. Whoopee.

tube Thrash. If you've ever seen an arcade game called Toobin' you'll know exactly what this is all about. But, while Toobin' was only pretty bad, this event is awful. Sitting in an inner tube and trundling down an icy slope at a snail's pace is not my idea of fun. What's worse is the fact that it's supposed to be a race against another tuber. This could have been quite good fun, because you can suffer punctures by hitting obstacles. The trouble is, instead of losing ground when this happens, both tubers stop dead for a few seconds, so there's no real penalty for doing badly. Boo! Get off!

Last but not least (it's hard to be least when you're up against such awful competition) is the Half Pipe event. A little bit 3D this one with the action being viewed from behind a ski-boarder as he screeches down a long snow covered trench (how does he screech on snow Thick? - SJ). Move fast, perform swanky stunts and you'll get more points than you can wave a stick at.

Righty ho! Having completed all the events, it's time to find out if you've won. Um, er... Ah. Okay, so it's not time to find out if you've won. In fact, when you finish the game it just goes straight back to the menu screen. No fanfares for success, no rude messages for failures, nothing. Even if you and a load of mates are competing it merely displays a bland screen full of scores for you to glance at. Pfft.

So, shall I sum up with a few words about the graphics (which, by the way, are a bit average), the sound (forgettable apart from a little digitized speech) and the gameplay (pretty dire)? Nope, this is one big snore. Don't do it. **ANDY**

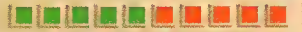
TOTAL!

Looks



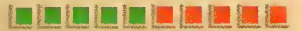
■ Nice and snowy backdrops with a bit of decent animation here and there

Sounds



■ A snippet of sampled speech, but otherwise it's all pretty forgettable

Gameplay



■ A mixed bag of events, none of which are that entertaining or playable

Life span

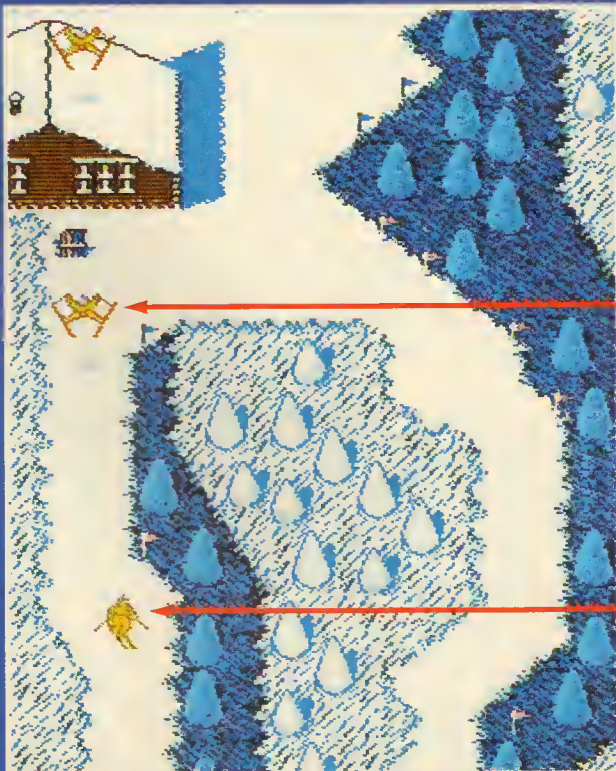


■ All five snow sports are quickly mastered and there's little else on offer

Basically, it's Skate Or Die with more white in it. There's even less two-player options although for solo players it has the edge - just

Final rating
53
Percent

It's all downhill from here...



Here's the little gimp you control. Fancy sliding down a freezing hill on an old tyre! Loon.

This is your skier. At the moment he's busy trying not to smash himself into bits on the ice below.

A Ranger Scout Pocket Knife (so it says here). Hit this and you'll get a stabbing pain in your inflatables.

Ah, that's all right then. Your skier survives the leap to ski on another day. Thrilling stuff, eh? Er...



TOTAL!

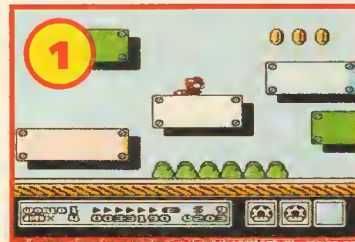
TACTIX

NES
TACTIC

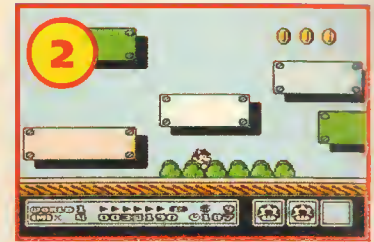
Hands up everyone who thinks SMB3 is the best game in the entire world? Good, everybody. Now, hands up all those who are having problems getting past world four? Hmm, quite a few. Anybody reached world eight yet? Ah, not many at all. Well, fear not, for here is the TOTAL! guide to reaching world eight using the secret warp whistles. We've had loads of people write in to tell us how to get them, but the first people to give us the goodies were Luke Richardson of Norwich and Toby Walsh of Gloucester. Thanks to them and thanks to everyone who helped out! Off we go...

Super Mario Bros 3

Warp whistle 1



Find this white block on Level 1-3. Kill the turtle then pull down on the joystick to make Mario crouch.



Stay crouched for five seconds (that's five counts of the timer). Mario falls through and stands behind the bushes!

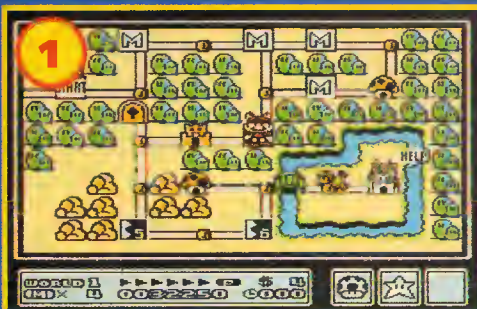


Quickly run right. (Watch out - even though you're behind the scenery you still have to jump over any enemies that appear.)



Keep going right and you'll find yourself in a secret mushroom house containing the first warp whistle! Job done.

Warp whistle 2



Right, off we go to get the second warp whistle. Make your way round to the first mini-fort in the middle of the map, where Boom-Boom lives.



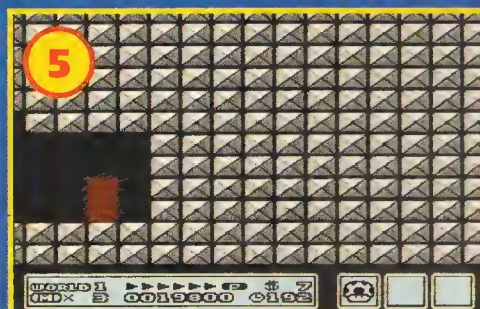
Get to the end of the level, just before the last door. You have to be Raccoon Mario by the time you reach here (there's a leaf in that block anyway, so don't worry).



Stomp on the Dry bones turtle and run as far right as you can - don't go through the door! Hold down the B button and run left to build up speed...



As soon as the P on your power meter flashes to signal maximum speed, use the A button to fly up. Keep going until you disappear off the top then move right.

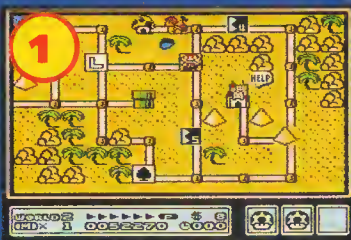


If you got it right the screen will scroll left as if you are travelling along it, even though you can no longer see yourself. When you come to a dead end push up.

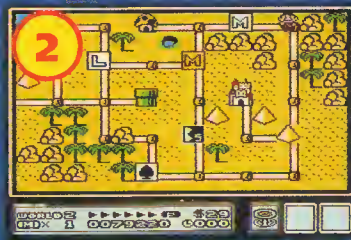


Ta-diddy-da-da-di-daaaaah! Secret warp whistle number two is yours. Right, now trot off and complete the rest of the world (a doodle or what?).

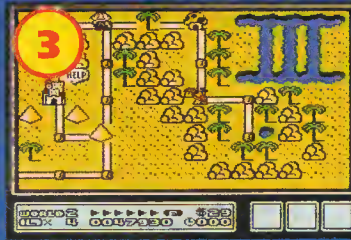
Warp whistle 3



When you reach the second world, defeat both the Hammer Brothers. You should now have the all-important hammer.



Go to the top right of the map and use the newly-obtained hammer to destroy that rock. It opens a new map section...



... Like this! There are two Hammer Brothers together here. Defeat them and the third and final whistle is yours!



Now, by using one or more of the three warp whistles, you can travel to any of the worlds from this special warp screen.



Robocop

Once you've used up all your continues and the game

TIP

freezes up, press

SELECT, START, B and A all at the same time. This gives you another continue. You can do this after every single game thereafter so you effectively have unlimited continues. Oodles of thank-you-type stuff to **Ben Davis** of Merthyr Tydfil for that little gem.



Snake Rattle N Roll

You've probably noticed a few bonuses that are out of reach in this game, like the extra life on level one. Well, **Michael Duong** from London has sent in this neat tactic for getting 'em. Make sure you've collected a few nibbly pibbles then drop into the water next to the item you can't reach. When the shark bites you, your snake will leap high into the air as it loses a tail section.

TACTIC

Then all you have to do is push the joypad towards the bonus and your snake will move onto it.



Turtles - Fall Of The Foot Clan

If you get low on energy, pause the game and press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A. This restores you to full power - but only works once.

TIP



Nintendo World Cup

These luvverly codes should make things a bit easier:

TIP

- Match 2 - Japan - 22431
- Match 3 - France - 03331
- Match 4 - USSR - 53031
- Match 5 - Spain - 36331
- Match 6 - England - 17231
- Match 7 - Mexico - 42931
- Match 8 - Holland - 56131



Tetris

How to completely destroy the whole point of playing Tetris in one easy lesson. When you play game B press SELECT and keep it pressed until the falling shape reaches the bottom of the screen. When it does the SUCCESS message appears as if you'd cleared all 25 lines. The list below shows you what end-screen you'll see, depending on the speed you choose. The picture is always of the Kremlin but different things fly past. Pointless, but at least you can see the ending!

TIP

- Speed 0 - Little birds
- Speed 1 - Bigger birds
- Speed 2 - Penguins
- Speed 3 - Flying saucers
- Speed 4 - Pterodactyls
- Speed 5 - Airships
- Speed 6 - Ostriches
- Speed 7 - Dragon
- Speed 8 - Space shuttles

If you play on speed nine lots of little dancing fellows appear. The higher the height setting, the more dancers there are. On speed nine, height five the dancers do their thang (along with Donkey Kong!) but also the minarets on the Kremlin fly off like rockets. Big thanks to **Marc Atkinson** of Crowborough for that little lot.



Days Of Thunder

Here's an odd cheat from **Ben Davis** of Merthyr Tydfil. On the qualifying race, try to do well on laps one to four. Then, when you get to the final bend before the finish line on the last lap, plough your car into the top barrier and keep it there as you cross the line. You'll end up with a fairly decent grid position!

TACTIC

The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle



Cheers to **Dave Green** of Chelmsford for all 80 codes to this platform game!

6	SXES	15	XWAS	24	ZY9Z	33	25SW	45	PWMW	57	P2RX	69	SE32
7	ZW4S	16	XXOS	25	W2RZ	34	2ZWW	46	PXCW	58	PTFX	70	SHE2
8	ZX9S	17	S2S2	26	WTFZ	35	TS2W	47	YAWW	59	Y2JX	71	ZE42
9	WSRS	18	S2WZ	27	X2JZ	36	TZPW	48	YXOW	60	YTKX	72	ZH92
10	WZFS	19	Z2ZZ	28	XTKZ	37	2W3W	49	225X	61	PPMX	73	W3R2
11	XSJS	20	ZTPZ	29	WPMZ	38	2XEW	50	2TWX	62	PYCX	74	W1F2
12	XZKS	21	SP3Z	30	WYCZ	39	TW4W	51	T22X	63	YPAX	75	X3J2
13	WWMS	22	SYEZ	31	XPAZ	40	TX9W	52	TTPX	64	YYOX	76	X1K2
14	WXCS	23	ZP4Z	32	XYOZ	41	PSRW	53	2P3X	65	S3S2	77	WEM2
1	---	10	WZFS	19	Z2ZZ	28	XTKZ	40	TX9W	52	TTPX	64	YYOX
2	SZWS	11	XSJS	20	ZTPZ	29	WPMZ	41	PSRW	53	2P3X	65	S3S2
3	ZSZS	12	XZKS	21	SP3Z	30	WYCZ	42	PZFW	54	2YEX	66	S1W2
4	ZZPS	13	WWMS	22	SYEZ	31	XPAZ	43	YSJW	55	TP4X	67	Z322
5	SW3S	14	WXCS	23	ZP4Z	32	XYOZ	44	Y2KW	56	TY9X	68	Z1P2

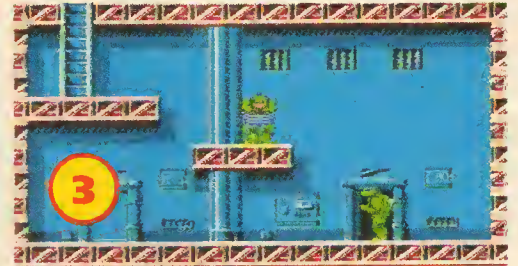
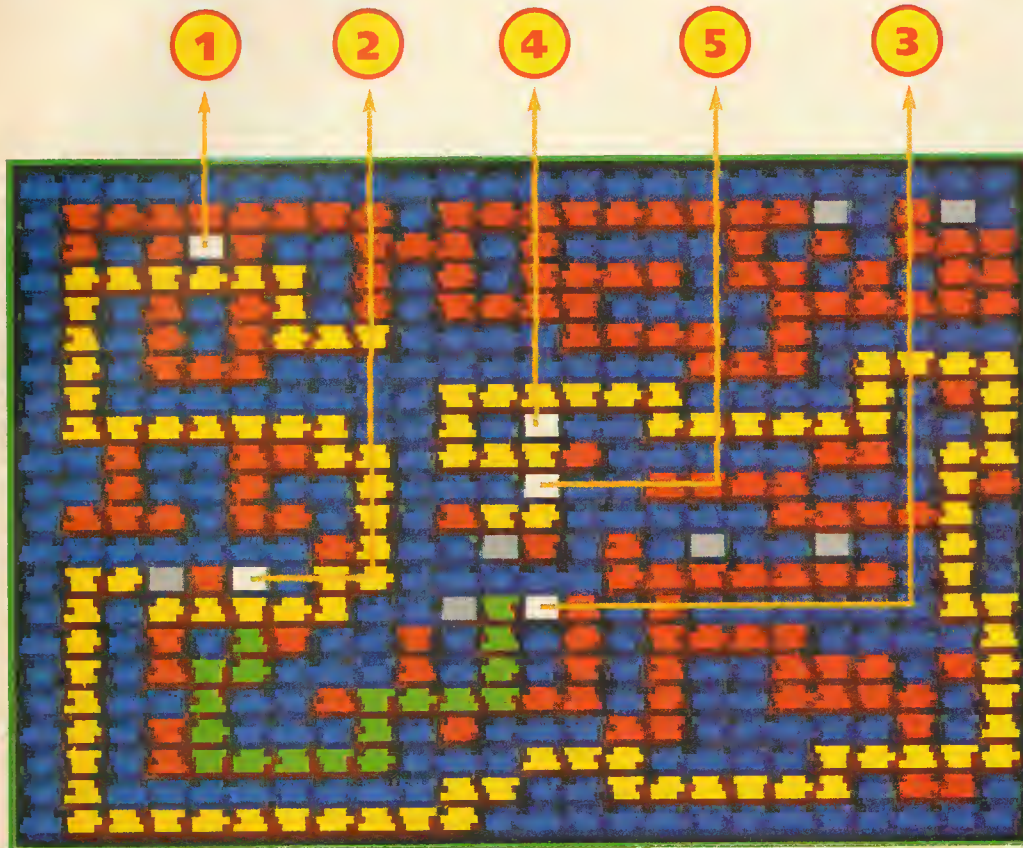
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles

TACTIC

Hands up all those that spotted the deliberate mistake last issue? That's right – the map of the dam level should

have been *completely* black, not just the left hand side! Well, lets hope you can't see any of these maps this time. Also a big

thanks to Kevan Summerson of Fife in Scotland who sent in some tips for this level. Cheers, Kev. Right, off we go...



Hey! You've found one of your buddies trussed up like a green turkey. Where's he being held? Read our tips and find out!

1 This building houses some of the rockets you need to destroy the road barriers. You'll find them in the top left of the map. Spin up through the gap, pick up the rockets and just walk right over the gap – don't try jumping it. Walk to the far right, collect the pizza and drop down the big gap. Move left and exit the stage. You'll need two lots of rockets to reach the end building so re-enter the level and do it all again!

2 Follow the yellow line down to building number 2. This level has two doors so you can enter one and come out of the other. However, don't bother trying – you'll just lose lives. It's better to just go through the door on the right. Use Donatello to clear the baddies above him before he climbs the first few ladders. Watch out on the fourth floor for the baddies that split into lots of little ones!

When you reach the long ladder on the left, drop off it to avoid the two flying creatures. Collect the kai force – it makes the last level of the game easier. In fact, it's best to leave this level and re-enter twice (like building number 1) to get 40 kai energies – you'll need 'em!

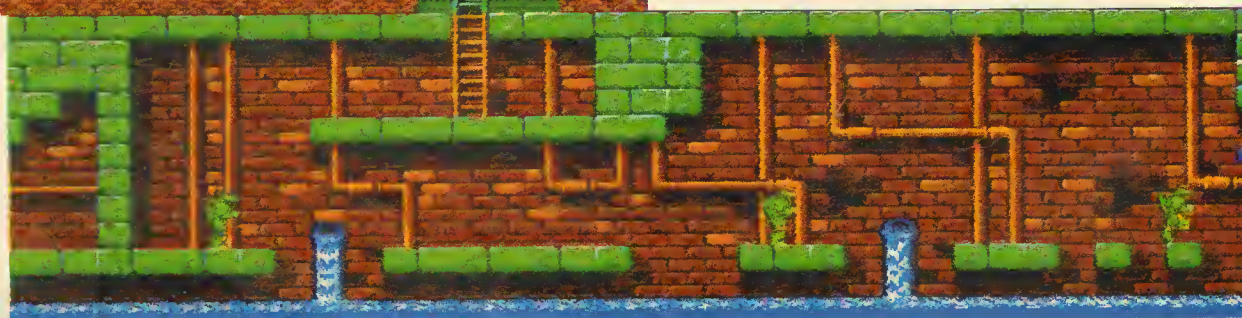
You can pick up the rope if you really want to, but there's no point – you don't need it for this level, and there are loads on the next.

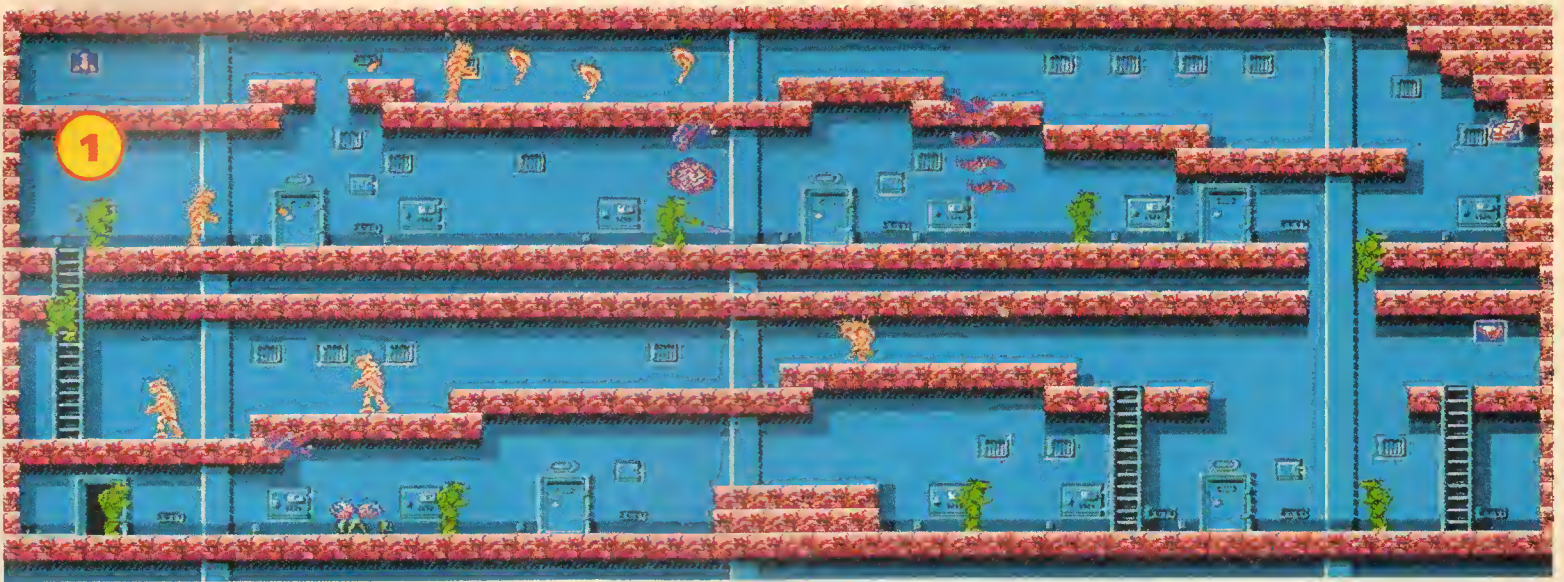
If you do venture into the sewer you'll be rewarded with a full-power pizza, but it's hard to get. Water doesn't hurt Turtles, but if you fall in you'll have to start the level all over again!

3 If you've lost a Turtle at this point, take the green line and go round to building number 3. Just go through the doorway and you'll find a captured Turtle there.



This is the toughest level in this stage of the game. The long stretch of weeny platforms is hard enough, but you also have hordes of flying creatures to contend with! Don't worry too much – when you fall in the water your Turtle just gets washed outside to start again.





Don't bother going through the building, there's nothing of any use in there.

4 From building 2, move left, down and along the bottom of the map. Now head up the right side and around left to building number 4.

Move left, up and back right. When you move down the ladder, edge down on the left hand side. This way the flying baddies will miss you.

Kill the baddie at the bottom. Now, when you drop off the first platform into the sewer, don't move too far left or the baddie reappears.

For the next section use Raphael as he fights best while in mid-air. Always use the small jump to cross the gaps.

Watch out for the pairs of flying creatures as you jump – always be prepared for the second beastie and keep that sai whizzing.

When you reach the last platform (shaped like an upside-down 'L') just stand below and hang around for the fire baddie to fall off. That way you don't risk getting burned!

When you jump right of this platform watch out for the last flyer who attacks while you're in mid-air (flippin' sneak). Bump off the last fire baddie then climb the ladder.

5 The last building is a doddle. Move up through the floors (easy enough) and appear on the roof (in the piccy).

Wait for the first baddie to fall off the building on the right (what a flongy!). Now jump across and down to meet the end-of-level guardians. Use kai force to kill the grey turtle; keep firing and kill the robot. Ta-daa! Splinter is free and now you can move to the airport!



This is one half of a building which joins two doorways – you can go in through one, move through the building, under the sewers, and then back out through the other door! Doing this is very hard (and unnecessary) so we've just shown you the half containing kai force.



THE SIMPSONS BART VS.

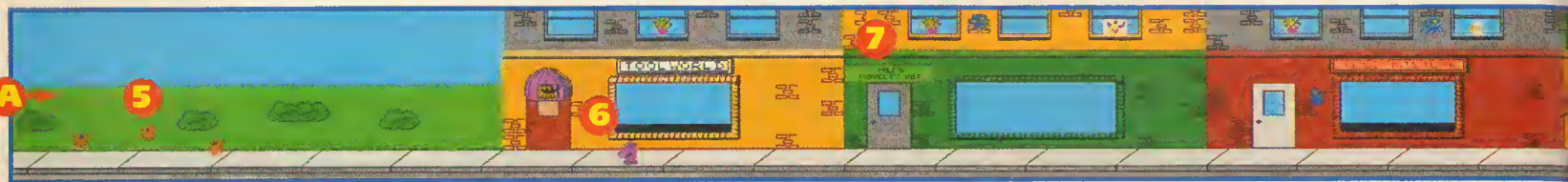
Painting the town red



ANDY!! Stop doing that! You did it last month and it wasn't funny or clever then. Sometimes your dweebaciousness and general gimposity astounds even me! (And everyone thinks you're a thick flongous weed!)



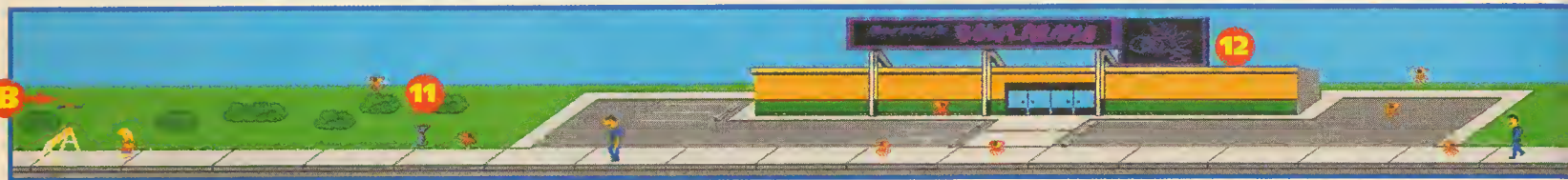
1 As soon as the Zebloid jumps right, leap onto the trash can and do a big jump (by pressing A and B) to collect the extra lives token at the top. Leave the trash can for now, you'll need some paint.



5 Jump over the Zebloids but don't worry about the coins – you don't really need any more than 10.

6 Buy a wrench. Spray the fire hydrant, stand next to it and use the wrench. Water washes the wet purple paint away. Jump onto the bottom window ledge, jump left onto the door window, then right onto the top of the shop window. Jump up and spray the plant pot, then drop down to the pavement.

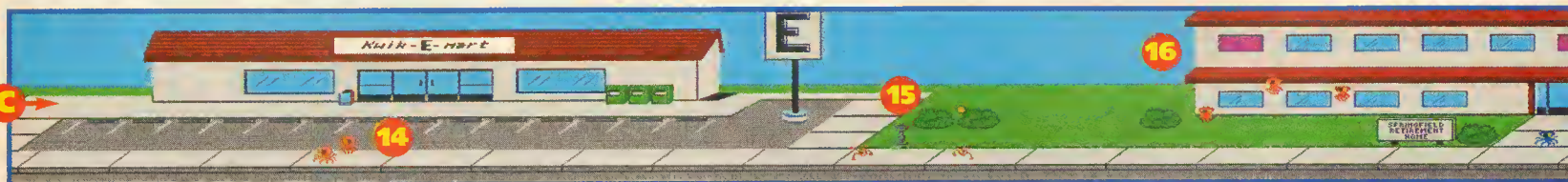
7 Buy one cherry bomb and lots of rockets. Spray the flowerpot as in 6. Carefully jump right onto the large window ledge. Run under the Zebloid and jump up for the extra life. Do a big jump onto the toyshop door window and spray the flowerpot above.



The skateboard section looks tricky at first but is a doddle. Tap the fire button to jump everything, and when Nelson appears press and hold the fire button for a big jump. This way he never hassles you.

11 Sneak underneath the red Zebloid and spray the bird bath. Scurry under the second Zebloid. You can walk under the next three Zebloids without breaking into too much of a sweat.

12 The neon 'Bowlarama' sign is both purple and off. To make it pink and on, you need to fire a rocket at it. Stand below the right hand edge of the sign and let her rip! That should get it flashing.



14 You need to run under this pair of Zeb's, holding button A (not too tricky). To get some useful extra lives, fire a rocket at the central 'E' in Kwik-E-Mart. Get ready to catch the Krusty clown icon. Now you can also access the sound test!

15 This is nasty. This single Zebloid scurries from side to side, so to spray the bird bath you need to run in behind him, spray and then run out again – if he gets close, jump out of the way.

16 All the purple shutters in the old peep's home can be removed by firing a rocket at them (you did buy lots didn't you?). You just have to walk under the next three Zebloids.

THE SPACE MUTANTS



2 If you wait around outside the cinema when the timer reaches 400 or 200 a kid dressed in purple appears. Spray him then get out of the way!

3 Jump up twice to the top of the window then jump left to get the spray can. Now go back and spray the first trash can. Jump up to the phone booth and use a coin. Moe comes out and you can spray his purple shirt. Jump by the next bush for an extra life.

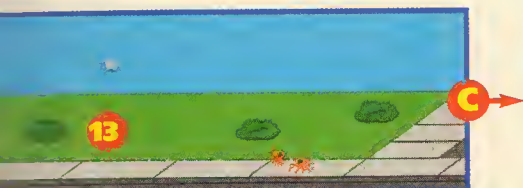
4 Spray the trash can then bounce off it onto the window ledge at the top. Jump left across the ledges until you reach the washing line. Walk along it and the washing will fall and cover up the purple objects.



8 Jump onto the top ledge using the trash can and jump left. Touch the paint pot to paint the canopy. (Or try rolling the ball, then jumping on it when it's beneath the paint pot.) Jump over the Zebloid and edge left. When you drop onto the door, edge right, jump and spray the flowerpot. Spray the trash can.

9 Jump up onto the petshop door's window using the trash can. Do a big jump over the Zebloid and spray the flowerpot. Stand on the bottom window ledge and set off the cherry bomb.

10 Stand on the grass - when parkie appears spray his purple shirt. Fire a rocket at the bird on the statue to scare it away.



13 The first set of three Zebloids leap up and down in a set pattern. Hold down the A button and run when the left hand Zebloid start going up. The second pair must be jumped using buttons A and B.

Here he is, scourge of Springfield, Nelson the bully. In this end-of-level shoot-out, it's Bart vs bully with water balloons at 20 paces. If you manage to spell 'MAGGIE' with alien proof tokens, she appears, dropping bowling balls which you can head at Nelson. But, to be honest, we reckon its easier without! As soon as Nelson appears just keep hammering the fire button and jump in time with him. You can actually kill him before he even gets one hit on you!

PAUSE	8950	1	589	0
MAGG I	SCORE	LIVES	TIME	GOALS



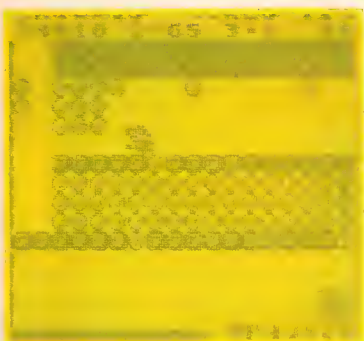
17 Another window shutter to rocket and a couple of blue Zeb's to avoid. These are slow, slow, quick quick, slow types, so beware. The next three red Zebloids can be casually strolled under 'cos they're easy.

18 Right... That's about it then. by now you should have all of 24 goals needed to get you onto the end-of-level guardian, Nelson. Er... The game designer's really got bored towards this bit of the level didn't they?

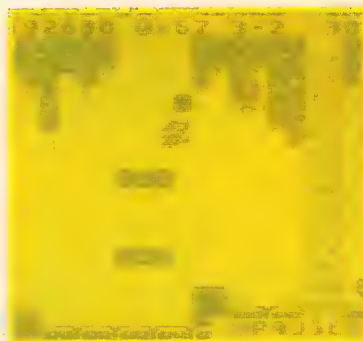
Super Mario Land



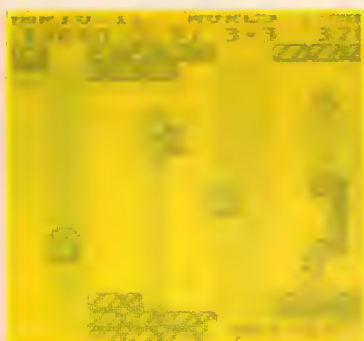
Well, here we are again with another thrilling installment of the Super Mario Land tips, as we battle through the last two worlds. Now the tips are a bit few and far between because these levels don't have many secrets. However, with the few extra power-ups and coins you just might manage to defeat Tatanga. If you manage to finish it twice on the trot apparently you're given a level select so you can play any level you want (seems pointless to me after playing them twice!).



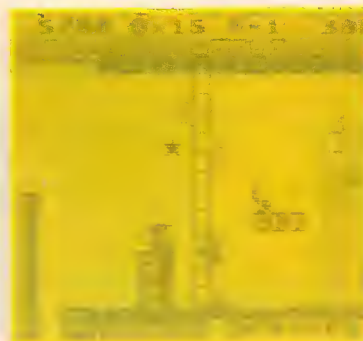
3 The block above the next gun turret contains a power-up. When you reach a platform covered in coins, drop down the gun turret on the right for coins.



4 World 3-2. After three pipes, get up onto the top of these two platforms. Stand on the very edge on the right and jump. Now you can run along the top!



7 Make sure you get a power-up from the last few '?' blocks. Then, when you reach Hiyoihoi, you can run straight through and only lose a half-life.



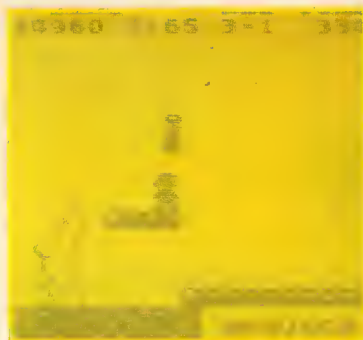
8 World 4-1. There's a power-up in the very first block. When you reach this point, jump off the tall pipe and hit the left roof block for invincibility star.



11 World 4-2. At this point hit the right-hand block for a power-up. Enter the gun pipe for mega coins! (There are 251 but you can't reach them all).



12 World 4-3. Mario climbs into the Sky Pop! Keep blasting the top pairs of blocks for a power-up, a 1-up and then an invincibility star.



1 World 3-1. The first group of four platforms has a power-up in the right-hand block. The next pipe (after the crumbly bridge) leads to a treasure room.



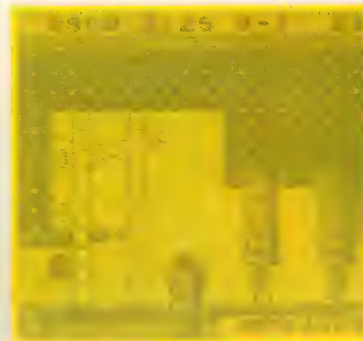
2 The third group of platforms like this has an invisible block hiding a secret 1-up. Bee-killing is easy: stand under the top left block and keep jumping.



5 World 3-3. Move along until the first major platform. Kill the turtle and headbutt the last but fourth block. Stand on the far right to collect the 1-up!



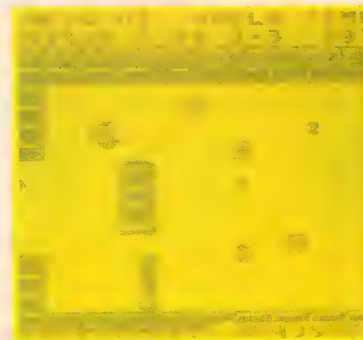
6 After the horrible platforms you can drop down the next pipe for a few coins. When you come back up don't worry! Just jump here for an invisible step.



9 When you find a bunch of Pakkun flowers and a gun (like this), always hit the right hand block. They hide coins, coins and a power-up (in that order).



10 There are three large groups of pipes. The first pipe of the third set leads to a coin room. Pull right as you fall or you'll miss the goodies.



13 Shoot the top block after the maze, here, for a power-up. Fly under the rotating disc, then quickly move far right to avoid the clutching hands!



14 Cloud boss Biokinton is easy - just keep clear. Tatanaga is trickier - stay in the middle left of the screen and watch your own ship, not his!

Review info

This is the important bit – the game reviews. Every review goes into a lot of detail on what each game is actually about. But if you want to know quickly what the good and bad points are, check the ‘thumbs up’ and ‘thumbs down’. These will give you a good idea of the game’s merits and any major faults that we’ve found. But that’s not all...



GOOD THINGS

If we think there are any particularly nice features in the game we’ll bung ‘em in here



BAD THINGS

If there’s anything outstandingly bad about the game then we’ll jolly well say so here

... If you want the *full* low-down on the game, look at the TOTAL! ratings box. It breaks down and rates the looks, sounds, gameplay and life span of each game. The meters rate from 0 to 10. The more green squares, the better the rating. Of course, lots of red means bad news! Have a gander at the one below to see what we mean.

TOTAL!

Looks



■ What are the graphics like? Is it an oil painting in pixels, or doggie-doo in dots?

Sounds



■ Do you want to rush out and buy the 12" re-mix? Or just reach for the volume?

Gameplay



■ Good graphics and sound are nice, but this is what counts. How much fun is it?

Life span

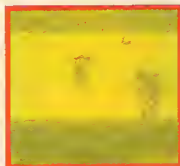


■ What if you can finish it in a day? Great gameplay is no good without a long life.

This is where me and Steve get to sum up. You can tell *exactly* what we think about a game just by reading this bit and looking at the rating!

Final rating
79
Percent

This month!



Skate Or Die – Bad ‘n’ Rad Page 58

Yet more skateboarding antics, but this sequel to the tedious NES game is a real hoot. It plays like a ‘proper’ game with a plot, seven different levels and lots of frantic downhill skateboarding action!



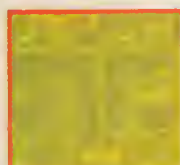
Othello Page 59

This classic boardgame has been translated perfectly to the Game Boy, with a tough computer opponent and a two-player mode. It also features a brilliant replay option so you can watch your best moves over again!



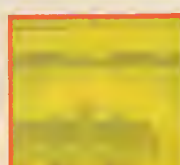
Rescue Of Princess Blobette Page 60

This is just a spiced-up version of the NES game, A Boy And His Blob (page 36), so don’t expect too much.



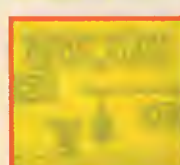
Duck Tales Page 61

He’s already starred in one decent game this month (page 32) and now Scrooge McDuck continues his treasure-hunting pogo-sticking on our favourite handheld.



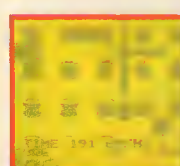
Fortress Of Fear Page 62

Talk about sequels! This is the *tenth* in the Wizards And Warriors series! It may sound like a dungeons and magic-type game, but there’s plenty of hacking and slicing to keep most arcade-actioners happy.



Gremlins 2 Page 63

A quartet of mega gremlins are terrorising New York and it’s up to sweet little mogwai Gizmo to save the day. There are only four levels, but they’re long and incredibly difficult!



Dyna Blaster Page 64

A funny, mazy blowing-things-up-type game. The action is fast, thought-provoking and pretty darn entertaining! There are also four different game styles so it’s a bit of a barg!



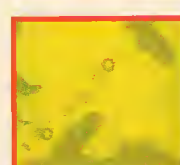
Hyper Lode Runner Page 65

Try to collect all the gold before the alien guards get you. Climb ladders, dig holes, scratch your head, think, ‘How the hell do I get that!?’ Then get completely hooked on this amazingly old, but classic game.



Navy Seals Page 66

Based on one major flopperoony of a film, Navy Seals follows the covert actions of the American SAS. This is a walk along ‘n’ shoot ‘em up (with a bit of die horribly ‘n’ go all the way back to the beginning).



Nemesis Page 67

No prizes for guessing what this is! Anyone who’s ever played in an arcade will recognise this classy sideways scrolling shoot ‘em up. Don’t spend time reading this wibble, whizz over to page 67 right now!

TOTAL!

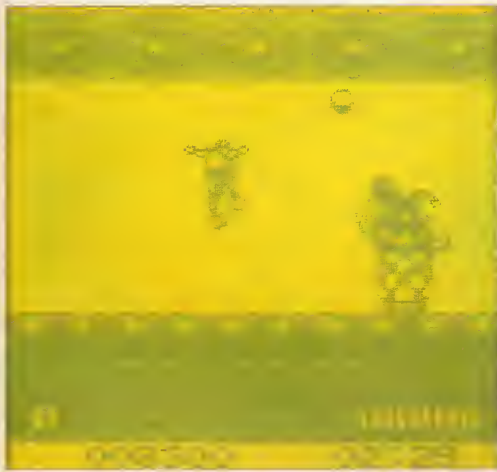
GAME BOY REVIEWS

SKATE OR DIE

BAD 'N' RAD

Oh no!, I hear you all cry. It's a Game Boy version of that duff skateboarding NES game that got 52% in issue one! What a nightmare! Well, don't panic. Game Boy Skate Or Die is in fact a completely different kettle of kneepads, as you might guess from the fact that it's not actually really called Skate Or Die at all. Nope, the real title of this game is Bad 'n' Rad, and it's really a sequel to the original effort.

It's a much better game too, with an 'interesting' plot about bad guys taking over the world and all that kind of stuff (well, sort of), and lots of straightforward frantic skating action. In fact, half



This end-of-level guardian looks a bit of a joke. A juggling clown doesn't really strike fear into your heart, but one thwack from his deadly balls will teach you differently.



Simple and highly addictive game-play draws you in right from the beginning



That incredibly annoying start-up sequence - aarrghh!

the time it's like nothing so much as a simplified high-speed Super Mario Bros, with lots of platform-leaping and bad-guys' head-squashing antics played at the kind of pace you might expect from F1 Race or something like that. The other half of the time it's more like the Jam section from the NES game, where you speed down a winding and vertically-scrolling course. There's a tough time limit and only your lightning-fast reactions to save you from the deadly obstacles in your path.

Skate Or Die - Bad 'n' Rad comes as seven levels of action, alternating between the Mario and downhill styles mentioned. You can practise on any of the first four, but to complete it you have to play through all seven in one go.

It's a very simple game, with just left, right, jump and duck controls to worry about (plus 'go fast' and 'go slow' in the downhill sections, although you don't use 'duck' in those), but it's also a pretty flippin' difficult one to actually get anywhere in, which makes it very addictive.

And that's about all there is to it, really. The only real flaw is that when you first switch the cart on, you have to sit through a lengthy rendition of the theme music before you get to start playing. It's a real pain, 'cos the last thing you want to do is sit

TOTAL!

Looks [Progress bar]

Very nice, and seems to suffer less from blurring than most games for some reason

Sounds [Progress bar]

Dynamic, pounding soundtracks suit the fast, four-wheeled action perfectly

Gameplay [Progress bar]

Some very different play styles through the various levels keep your interest up

Life span [Progress bar]

Very hard, but not quite thrilling enough to make you persevere to the end



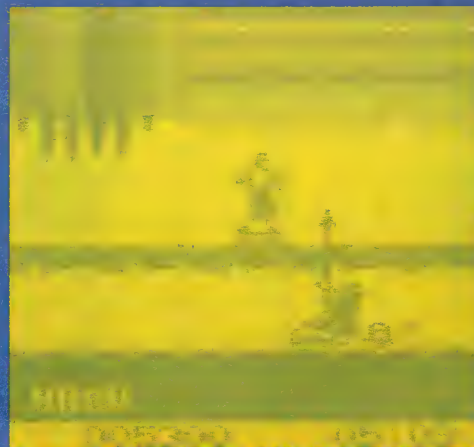
This is a fun little game, but it's probably a touch too simplistic to hold your attention for all that long once you learn all the levels

Final rating **76** Percent

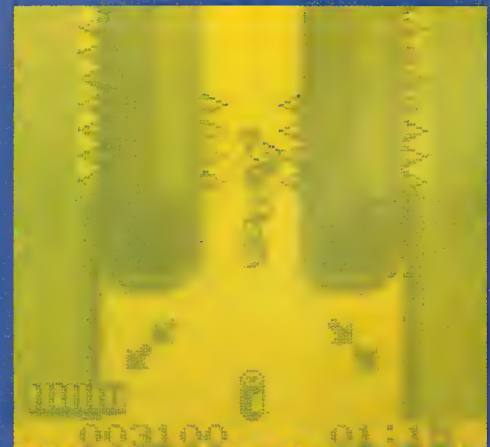
around for 30 seconds before getting down to the action, but the programmers are proud of their tune and they're going to make blimmin' well sure you listen to it! Apart from that, this is a groovy little arcade game that's a lot of fun to play, and as long as you don't expect it to tax your brain in any way you'll get a lot of enjoyment out of it. **ANDY**



The little arrows are supposed to be a help. Oh great! So I'm supposed to head for that tiny gap flanked on either side by a row of spikes and a raging torrent of sewage.



Look, if you could just stop poking that spear up my bottom for a moment I'd like to ask you the way to the skateboard park. The locals are a bit odd so jump over them.



Ah! Ooh! Yah! Oooyah! Yoip! Eeek! Hoo! Blimey... All this for a can of coke. If you survive the spikey pipes on level four, try picking up the cans for extra energy.

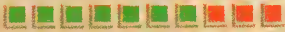
For Game Boy (1 or 2 players)

From Nintendo

Price £20

TOTAL!

Looks



■ There's not much you can do with Othello, but this is as good as it could be

Sounds



■ Again, you don't really need sound, but the optional tune is groovy enough

Gameplay



■ Othello has been around for hundreds of years. Why? Because it's a brilliant game

Life span



■ See above. I still can't beat level two. Beating level four could take a lifetime

A fab conversion of a true classic. Othello is one of the greatest board games ever invented, and this version will challenge even real experts

Final rating
92
Percent

OTHELLO

Oh no! It's a thinky, brainy, gosh-my-head-hurts type of game! This could kill me!



Othello (also called Reversi) is one of the oldest board games in existence. It's a two-player game, where one person plays with black counters and the other plays with white counters. The (very) basic idea is to turn all your opponent's counters to your own colour by capturing them between pieces of your own. It's also one of those games that it's much simpler to play than to explain properly, so I won't bother trying to do that. Enough to say that you'll pick up the rules (there are only about two) in about half-a-minute, but you'll spend an awful lot longer trying to get the better of your Game Boy.

There are four skill levels, and you can choose to play whichever side you prefer, and also whether or not you want musical accompaniment throughout the game. You can challenge either the Game Boy or another player, and for once (as with The Chessmaster) you don't need two copies of the game to use the two-player mode.

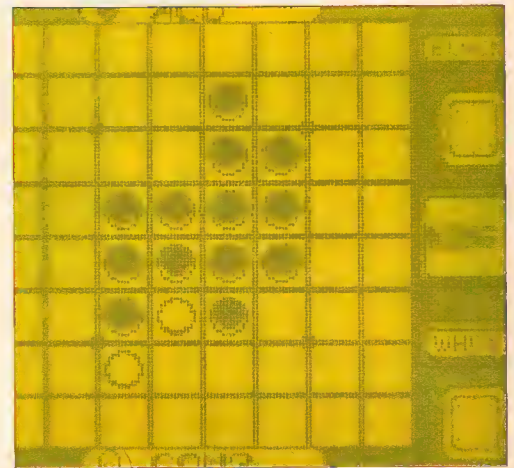
The best feature, though, is the replay mode. At the end of a game, you can elect to watch a move-by-move rerun of the match you've just finished,

PIECES

Fast, slick and nicely presented – the replay mode is a great idea. Easy to learn, but incredibly hard to beat

PASTINGS

The Game Boy takes quite a long time to make its move at the higher levels. Expensive for what it is



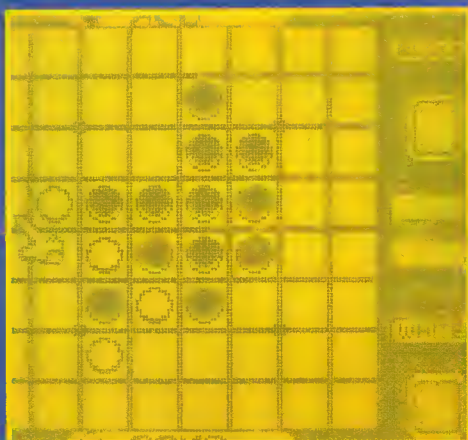
This is the main playing screen. Erm, in fact it's the *only* playing screen. Well, whaddya expect? It's Othello innit? There are black pieces, white pieces and a board. That's it.

and study it to see where you went wrong (or gloat over your stunning victory!). What's more, at any stage you can stop the replay and step back into the game in progress, so you can see how the contest would have developed if you'd played a different move at some point.

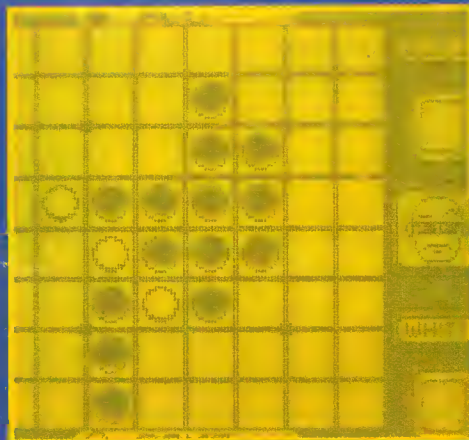
This makes Game Boy Othello a great way to learn how to play the real thing, as well as a brilliant cart in its own right. The simple gameplay means that you can whip it out and play any time. A must for everyone's collection. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

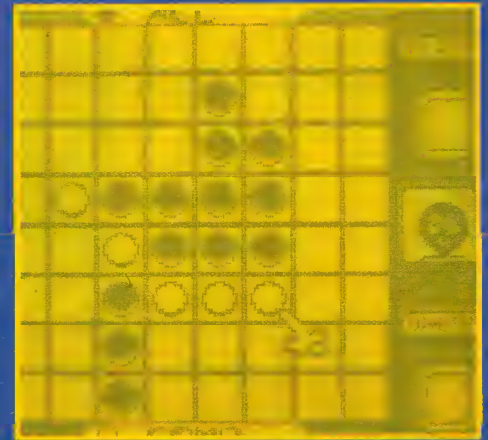
Your move, creep!



I'm black and the Game Boy's white. The Game Boy has just placed a white piece so that only one of the blacks is captured (*dumb* move). So, what amazingly intelligent move can Thicky pull off now?



The 'not so Thicky after all' Mr Dyer cunningly places a black tile at the bottom. This both recaptures a white piece and furthermore prevents the Game Boy recapturing that vertical line. Genius!



Chortle! The pitiful Game Boy places a tile to the right, again capturing only one piece. I think you can guess how the rest of the game went. (Yes, his royal flongyness went on to a humiliating defeat – Steve).

THE RESCUE OF PRINCESS BLOBETTE

For Game Boy (1 player)

From Nintendo

Price £25

This game won an American award last year called the Parent's Choice Approval, which is a bad sign from the start – let's face it, anything your parents think is good for you probably isn't going to be a lot of fun! Parents think cod-liver oil is good for you when everyone knows it just makes you feel violently sick for hours after one tiny spoonful.

In *The Rescue Of Princess Blobette* you play a boy with a strange pet called Blob (in fact, this is the sequel to the NES game *A Boy And His Blob*, reviewed on page 36). The strangest thing about Blob is that when the boy feeds it various flavours of jellybeans, it turns into different shapes, ranging from a ladder to a trampoline to an umbrella and more besides!

The idea of the game is to rescue Princess Blobette from the evil Alchemist's tower, but for once there aren't lots of baddies out to stop you. The difficulty in *The Rescue Of Princess Blobette* comes from the fact that the Alchemist's castle is

a huge and forbidding place, filled with stupidly high walls and long drops. To make your way to the Princess's cell you'll have to make full use of your blobby friend's strange capabilities, so you'd better get searching for those Jellybeans!

Unfortunately, what this really means is lots of completely dull traipsing around almost-empty screens endlessly cycling through lists of jellybean flavours trying desperately to remember what each flavour turns Blob into and hoping beyond

hope that one of the things will miraculously get you out of the seemingly-impossible situation which you're stuck in (phew!).

You don't get any clues in this game, you simply have to guess which blobby item can get you out of trouble, fiddle around with the unwieldy controls until you get to try it, then if it doesn't work try something else until you either get it right or you get completely bored and give up.

If you've just forked out £25 on this you'll probably stick at it for a while, but the sense of reward at problems solved isn't enough to make up for the boredom you have to put up with. It's almost like they designed a framework for a potentially brilliant game then forgot to put any hazards in. Sorry, but this, like the NES version, is tedious. **ANDY**

TOTAL!

👍 STRAWBERRIES 👍

If you prefer mental exercise rather than reaction-testing, this is for you. Blob transformations are ingenious

👎 LICORICE 👎

Poor control over the boy. Few puzzles spread over a vast, empty playing area – no arcade thrills whatsoever



Along the way, the boy discovers hoards of diamonds just waiting to be plucked from their resting place. How do you do it? Yep, it's tedious old tangerine trampoline time again. Bounce, collect, bounce, yawn, zzzzz.



This the very start of the game. You only have a few jellybeans, and none of them get you through this door. The trick is to flip a tangerine bean into Blob's gob and bounce up into the air...



... Then when you reach the top there's a whole sack-full of different flavoured jelly beans just waiting to be nabbed. And sure enough, you now find you have lime jellybeans which turn Blob into a key. Hurrah!

TOTAL!

Looks



■ The screen's empty most of the time, but when there are graphics, they're OK

Sounds



■ Any less and you'd think you'd gone deaf. Whistling effect is good though

Gameplay



■ Hideously short on action, and nowhere near as controllable as it should be

Life span



■ It'll take you an age to complete – only if you don't give up on it right at the start

Your parents might like this, but you probably won't. If you're into mind-stretching puzzles it's all right, but it bores me into a million bits

Final rating
55
Percent

DUCK TALES

For Game Boy (1 player)
From Nintendo
Price £25

Okay, so NES Duck Tales isn't the greatest of buys for £40. But wait! If you've got a Game Boy, why not pay £25 for it instead? The hand-held adventures of Scrooge McDuck are almost exactly the same as the NES version, in that Scrooge travels to the five corners of the world (moon included) to retrieve five valuable treasures. The only real difference is that this one is easier to play.

You get the same three difficulty levels, the same music, the same graphics (but without the colour), and more or less the same levels. The two games aren't exactly identical in layout, but they're close enough that if you know your way around the NES version you won't find yourself getting lost all that often on the Game Boy.

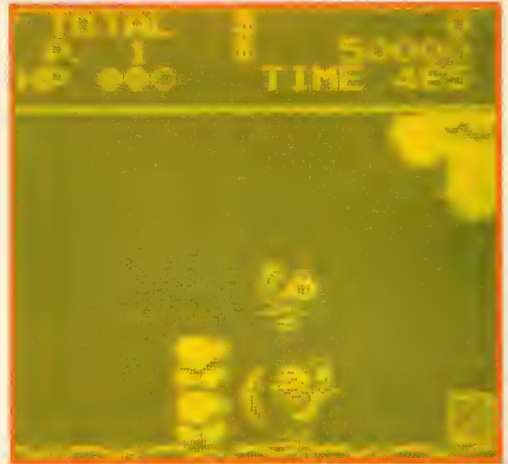
The major difference between the two versions in play (and the biggest advantage of the Game Boy one) is that to use Uncle Scrooge's pogo-stick on the Game Boy, you only have to press button 'B' after jumping – you don't have to press the joy pad down as well. It's only a little tweak, but you'd be surprised how much it improves the game's play-

bility – this way, you find yourself leaping around switching between pogo-ing and ordinary jumping without having to stop and think about it for a moment first.

The biggest disadvantage of the Game Boy version is that although the graphics are very detailed and pretty, the detail is actually a little too much for the prone-to-blurring LCD screen, and the contrast between the shades of grey isn't good enough to let you see what's going on unless you're playing the game under a very strong light.

Also, quite often when actually playing, you'll have to jump onto the top of what looks like a solid wall, because there are bits of play area on the other side that you can't see. There's no way of telling where these bits are except by accidentally landing on them, and it's a bit of a drag to have to jump at every single wall in the game just in case you're missing something.

Apart from those quibbles this is a nifty game and well worth getting if you're one of those people who enjoy **TOTAL!** Mario-style escapades. **STEVE**



Yoips! There's some weird duckoid creature taking a swipe at poor old Scrooge. Best pogo his blinkin' brains out, then!



Calamity! Pointy sticky-up bits everywhere. The only way to avoid getting pranged is to use the pogo-stick but Scrooge risks getting speared through the head if he does! Poop.

TOTAL!

Looks



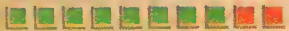
■ Pretty, but very hard to make out in anything but the brightest of lighting

Sounds



■ Lots of different bouncy tunes. A few pleasing sproings and clanky sounds too

Gameplay



■ Quite a bit better than the NES version, due to the friendlier jumping system

Life span



■ A couple of days of hard playing will see this one off without much trouble

BEAKS

There are plenty of places to go and heaps of things to collect. It's great fun to pogo around everywhere spiking baddies!

TAILFEATHERS

The overly-detailed graphics are slightly confusing. Scrooge's quest is far too easy

Hello duck key



Down in the African mines Scrooge's treasure hunt comes to an abrupt halt when he finds a locked door. But is the key under the mat? Is it dangling through the letterbox on a piece of string? No. It's in Transylvania of all places. So...



... Mr McDuck has to trek all the way to deepest Drac-land and pass through a magical mirror just to reach the bloomin' thing. Luckily, though, another magical mirror takes him straight back again. Isn't modern technology wonderful?

Slicker and more fun than its big brother version, but still a bit too easy for most gamers. Buy it for your kid brother – or sister for that matter

Final rating
78
Percent

FORTRESS OF FEAR

This game is the tenth in Acclaim's Wizards and Warriors series, but the first one to make it onto the Game Boy. You control a heroic knight by the name of Kuros (*isn't that an aftershave? - Andy*), and your objective is to enter the fortress of the evil Wizard Malkil and rescue the kidnapped Princess Elaine (who ever heard of a princess called Elaine?).

Malkil has been a thorn in your side for yonks, but every time he's threatened to enslave your kingdom you've beaten him back, steadily weakening his powers. Now, 17 years after your last battle, he's returned for perhaps the final conflict. Seize your chance - enter the Fortress Of Fear and put a stop to his evil wizardly pranks forever...

At first I thought this was going to be a really deep and complicated affair, but I was overjoyed to discover that it couldn't actually be simpler to play. In fact, it's not at all dissimilar to Double Dragon and other beat 'em ups of that ilk. The bulk of the game is taken up with simply walking and jumping along the screen in one direction and hacking up enemies with your sword. Great!

As you progress it gets a little more involved, and map-making comes in handy to get the maximum benefit from the power-ups concealed in chests and so on. But basically there's nothing to get in the way of the hack 'n' slash action - well,

👍 DUNGEONS 👍

Very easy to just pick up and get into, and graphically interesting enough to make you want to keep on getting further into it



Ah-hah! A key, bet that'll come in useful. Now if only I could find something to open it with... (Above you dimbo!! - Andy.)

apart from the extremely precise platform-leaping you'll need to get through the later stages, that is. It's at this point that the sort-of-3D-but-not-quite graphics can become slightly irritating, as it's a bit awkward to work out exactly how close to the edge of a platform you are.

With this mastered, what you've got is a game which strikes a good balance between straight-

👎 DRAGONS 👎

The lack of passwords means it's a bit of a bind to have to keep going back to the very beginning when you lose all your lives

forward sword-swinging violence and careful manoeuvring of your character - a task which is made easier by the extremely good control you have over him. Kuros leaps varying distances according to how long you keep the jump button held down, and you can steer him in mid-air too, for access to those out-of-the-way platforms.

Fortress Of Fear is a highly atmospheric game and, thanks to the tricky gameplay and instinctive control, one which is very easy to get yourself completely immersed in. It's not quite as frantic as most beat 'em ups, but the mix of fighting and exploration stops it falling victim to the feeling of repetition which often dogs similar games.

The game really needs a password or continue system to stop the frustration of having to repeatedly trek through the early levels. Unfortunately, you don't get either of those here. However, if you're the kind of person who can afford the time to play the game for an hour or two at every sitting, though, you shouldn't miss this.

STEVE



TOTAL!

Looks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lovely solid look and smooth blur-free movement gives it a very classy feel 	
Sounds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not being able to switch the music off is a bit of a pain, but the tunes aren't so bad 	
Gameplay	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very pleasing indeed, with lots of control over the main character 	
Life span	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A bit of care should see this finished quickly, but it'll still be fun to play 	

Not having passwords or battery back-up spoils the long-term appeal a bit, but it's lots of fun, with a different feel to most other Game Boy titles

Final rating

84

Percent

Animal aggro



Wooaaah! Er... Hello mister snakey beast. Hehehe! Can I come past then? Hello? (I think it's dead. Looks stuffed to me...)



Now where's that blimmin' bat gone. He was here a minute ago (um, but I had my eyes shut so I didn't see where he went).

GREMLINS 2



No need to waste that musical note above your head. Just leap up and down on the block and the boxing gloves will punch the living daylights out of the Gremlins!

Gizmo has been making babies again. Yep, he's been taking sneaky showers, and having midnight feasts. This time around he has brought four ultra-powerful and highly evil Gremlins into existence.

Each of these mega-Gremlins acts as an end-of-level guardian in the game so yes, you've guessed it, there are only four levels. This doesn't make it easy, though. After breezing through level one you'll find yourself getting regularly thrashed by levels two to four. There's also a smattering of bonus games so it's not as small a challenge as you'd first imagine.

You play Gizmo and have to get through the levels by running, jumping and collecting weapons.



Blimey! All tool-boxed-up with no place to go. But, if I leap onto this spring and press the jump button it should send me flying high into the air to pastures new. Then I can find some enemies and 'box' their ears. Ha!

MOGWAI
Heaps of challenge – after level one it's doom city all the way! The graphics are wonderfully detailed and beautifully animated

MONSTERS
Well, lot's of slightly easier levels would have been better than four horrendous ones

You can pick up three types of weapon. On each level there's a pencil which you can batter enemies to death with (horrors! Death by HB). There are also cassette recorders which enable you to fire deadly musical notes at your enemies (alternatively try playing Sonia's LP to them and they'll probably die vomiting anyway). But one word of warning – the note can only be used once.

And finally there's the tool box, one of the strangest power-ups I've seen in any game. Gizmo can climb into it to protect himself, but the funny part is that you can still run and jump around while you're inside it. If you touch an enemy when you're 'wearing' the box you kill it. However, it only protects you against a limited amount of attacks and these happen an awful lot. There are mice, gremlins, spiders, bats and spiky balls all out to make minced Mogwai of you.

It's a simple game, with the only mental challenge coming from trying to find the least dangerous route through the simplistic maze of platforms. But it's this simplicity that makes it fun to play. No brain-taxing, just plough through lashing out at all and sundry with your pencil.



Gremlins are a bit hard to kill, especially if you don't have the pencil. Ah well, one well-aimed note should make this one shrivel up into nothingness, leaving me to go and blat that formidable mouse above.

TOTAL!

Looks [Progress bar: 10/10]

■ A very pretty game with subtle but well-drawn backgrounds and lovely animation

Sounds [Progress bar: 8/10]

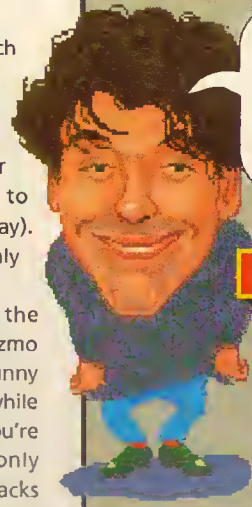
■ Good soundtracks and some adequate effects but sound is not its strength

Gameplay [Progress bar: 8/10]

■ Fairly simple gameplay. Yet as a fast-moving reaction-tester it's excellent

Life span [Progress bar: 4/10]

■ Boy is this a toughie. Despite only four levels it'll keep you going for ages



Not the most thought-provoking of games, but it's so playable who really cares? The graphics are jolly spiffy so all in all, more than worth a look

Final rating
82
Percent

And this leaping about-type action is all the better for taking place in such a good-looking game as this. The detailed but subtle backdrops don't interfere with the action, so you can admire the delightful animation and humourous touches that appear right throughout the four levels. Gremlins 2 is a truly hootworthy game. **ANDY TOTAL!**



Bonus stage one. As the counter ticks down to zero you have to hit the punch bag as quickly as possible by tapping button A. Get a hundred hits and you get an extra life. Here I'm well on the way to getting nowt.

DYNA BLASTER

This one's got a bit of a strange history to it. About five years ago a game called Eric And The Floaters came out on a creaky old eight-bit computer the Spectrum. You controlled a funny little man called Eric (logically enough) who ran around a maze blowing up walls and bad guys with bombs. It was a cult success (ie it was brilliant but absolutely no-one bought it at all), and then it disappeared until last year when Hudson Soft (the Japanese software house) updated it with power-ups and prettier graphics and released it as Bomber Man on the PC Engine.

It got great reviews everywhere, so Nintendo bought it, updated it some more, and put it out on the Game Boy with the new title of Bomber Boy (although the cart also included the original Bomber Man version of the game as a bonus). When the cart came to be released in America, Nintendo decided they didn't like the new title very much after all and called it Atomic Punk instead, but Nintendo UK didn't fancy that either, so now it's called Dyna Blaster. Confused yet? I certainly am...

Okay, so enough history. What do you actually do? Well, you actually get four games in this cart (worra bargain!). In the basic Bomber Man game

BONUSES

Four games is brilliant value, and each one is great in its own right. The password system gives you a fighting chance

BOMBS

Maybe just a tiny bit slow (but it doesn't really matter too much).

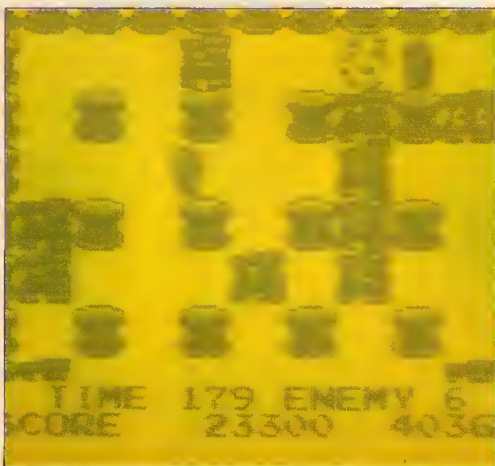
The graphics aren't really all that enthralling – a bit basic



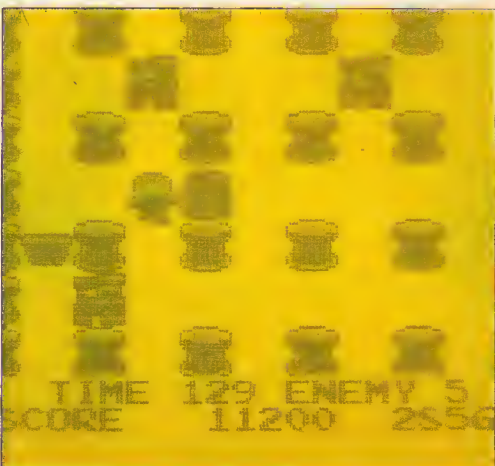
No point doing things by halves: if you've got two bombs, use 'em! Setting bombs off one after the other allows you to make a pretty pattern (and kill even more baddies).

(called Game 'B' here), your little chap runs around a series of mazes which are made up of destructible and indestructible blocks. Also running around are varying numbers of bad guys, and the objective of the game is to blow them all up by setting time bombs and catching the nasties in the subsequent explosions. You can then escape to the next maze through the hidden door which is revealed when you blow up the destructible blocks.

You start off with the ability to lay one weedy bomb at a time, but behind the destructible blocks you can find power-ups (one per maze) which let you drop more than one at once, increase the size of explosions, make your little man run faster, allow him to walk through walls and other useful stuff like that. Some of the power-ups stay with you until the very end of the game, while some are



In later levels the opponents get more troublesome. This one can break through blocks so there's no hiding place for our hero. Time to resort to plan 'B': running away.



Several deaths later, our main man succeeds in locating the exit door. With a spring in his step and a clean pair of pants, it's off to the next level!

lost when you lose a life.

Game 'A' is more or less the same thing only more complicated. It takes place over eight different worlds, all with lots of sub-worlds and different characteristics which alter the way you play the game. In Windria, for example, you have to battle against a constantly-changing wind which affects your character's walking speed.



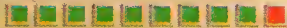
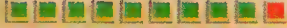
As well as just finding power-ups lying around, you can buy them from a shop which can be visited between worlds, using gold which you earn by completing sub-worlds before your time limit runs out. Unlike Game 'B' which is played purely for points, Game 'A' has an ultimate objective and can be completed, with the aid of a useful password system.

The other two games are both variants on the two-player link-up mode. In the first one the two players basically play Game 'B' against each other, the idea being to kill the other player before he kills you. You collect power-ups as normal, but in the other variation both players start with multiple super-powerful bombs.

Dynablaster is a superb game. It's so simple to get into, yet Game 'A' gives you lots of scope for tactics and strategy too. Unfortunately I've run out of space to tell you the other things which are brilliant about it, so just take my word for it and go and find out for yourself. Buy this game! **ANDY**



TOTAL!

Looks	
<p>■ Graphically Dynablaster isn't anything special, but it's as pretty as it needs to be</p>	
Sounds	
<p>■ Lots of funky, groove-thang tunes and the blasting effects are splendidous</p>	
Gameplay	
<p>■ Game 'B' is the better of the two, but they're both excellent so it matters not</p>	
Life span	
<p>■ Game 'B' is easy-ish, but Game 'A' and the two-player modes will last for ever</p>	

This was a fab six years ago, it's even better now. Perfect for the portable wonder – one of the best Game Boy games to date!

Final rating

93

Percent

HYPER LODERUNNER

For Game Boy (1-2 players)

From Nintendo

Price £25

This is another cart which has been converted from a really ancient computer game, this time one on a really (really) old computer called the Apple. Hyper Lode Runner is set over 50 scrolling levels of platforms and ladders, and the idea is to collect all the gold on each screen without being killed by the wandering alien guards.

The levels consist of masses of brick platforms, columns and walkways which conceal the piles of gold, plus ladders and tightropes which sort of help you to negotiate the level.

The only thing you have to help you collect all the shiny stuff is a laser drill with which you can make holes in the brick floors. You can only dig single holes on your immediate right or left (by pressing button A or B) and you must be careful: walk into a hole surrounded by brick and that's it – you're doomed. You can't dig either side and you can't climb out. Oh dear.

However, in the same way that you get stuck, you can also trap your enemies. Drill a hole and

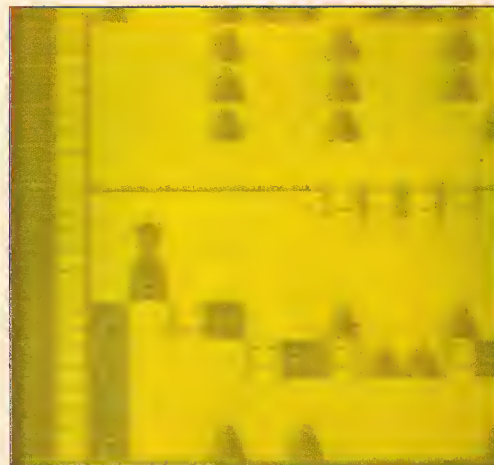
wait for them to fall in. Now you can walk across the hole by walking on their head. Ha!

As well as collecting huge amounts of dosh, some screens also have a door on them, and the only way to open it is to collect the key. On going through the door, you find another screen full of platforms, ladders, gold and guards which also has to be completed before you can clear the level.

In the unlikely event (I'll get to why it's unlikely in a minute) of you finishing all 50 levels, Hyper Lode Runner also comes with a built-in construction kit which lets you devise up to 50 new levels of your own to torment yourself and your friends with. Unfortunately (and rather stupidly) there's no battery-backed memory or password or anything for this section. When you switch the power off all your carefully-designed creations are lost forever, which makes the construction kit a bit of a waste of time at the end of the day.

As far as graphics and sound go, Hyper Lode Runner doesn't have anything special to offer in either department. The backdrops are as plain as the look on Andy's face when you ask him what the capital of France is, although the teensy characters do move quite nicely. Sound, too, is nothing to shout about: it's all pleasant enough, but won't have you sellotaping a pair of Game Boys to the sides of your head or anything.

Well, so far so good. However, there is one serious drawback with Hyper Lode Runner – it's a



That thin line across the screen is a tightrope which I can use to get about. The termite hills are, in fact, heaps of gold.

bit hard. Well, that's a bit of an understatement. Actually it's *amazingly, incredibly* hard. I've been playing Lode Runner for years and years on various machines, and I've never experienced anything this tough. Unless you're a game player of really special talent, you'll probably get very frustrated with this pretty quickly, so beware.

But if you can handle it get this, get good at it and you'll impress your chums no end!

STEVE



TOTAL!

Looks



Fine but a bit basic, and it's a shame you can't see the whole screen at once

Sounds



Some nice effects and OK tunes, but nothing to get too excited about

Gameplay



It's easy enough to get into. However, even experts won't get very far with it

Life span



If you don't get put off totally by the difficulty, this will take years to finish

This is a great game, but it really is too difficult. If you want a big, big challenge, this is the cart to go for. Pity about the construction kit, though

Final rating
84
Percent

LADDERS

Very playable and extremely challenging for hardened gamers. The password after every level gives you just a hint of a chance



'Ha! Trapped, you fiend!' I've managed to capture one of the aliens in a hole. Unfortunately the rotten creature can climb out so, unless I want a severe thumping, I'd better scurry down the ladder, quick.

PITFALLS

This is the toughest cart to date by far – one tiny mistake and you have to start the level all over again. No save option for construction kit



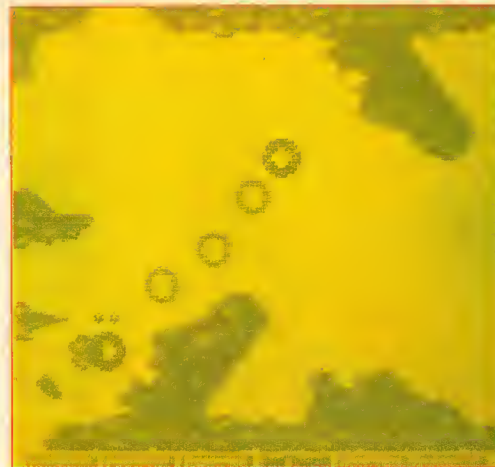
This is the screen editor and as you see it – Hold on! Oy, Dyer! Have you been messing about with my Game Boy again?! Sigh... As you see, you can make stupid names with if you're really, really dim (and dweeby).

NEMESIS

For Game Boy (1 player)

From Konami

Price £25



NES fans will already be familiar with this game under its well-known alias of Gradius. It's a conversion of the sideways-scrolling shoot 'em up that pioneered the use of power-ups in the arcade. Some of the levels have been changed or rearranged, but essentially what you get is still Nemesis.

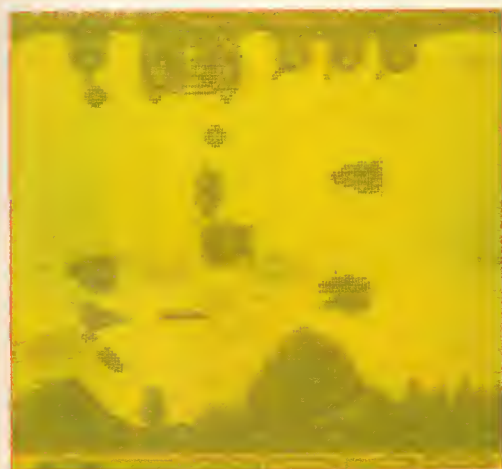
The objective is simple enough – reach the end of five levels of increasing difficulty, blasting waves of aliens to reveal tokens which you collect to provide your initially weedy spaceship with ever-sexier weaponry. You can collect speed-ups, air-to-ground missiles, double fire (shoots diagonally up and forward at the same time), laser guns (a powerful beam which slices through whole waves of enemies), the curiously-named 'options', which provide up to two invincible pods (these mimic the ship's movements and fire the same weapons in sync) or a '?' which turns out to be a force shield, protecting your ship from several collisions with enemies and their bullets.

In fact you can accumulate all of these power-ups (except laser and double shot – it's one or the other) at the same time! Be careful, though,



GOODIES

Superb version of a classic coin-op. The set-up screen allows even novice blasters to make the most of it. You won't beat this in a day!



I'm still not very powered-up, although I do have a laser. Of course, against four gun emplacements, a ship generator, four alien ships a hill and a tree, one weeny laser is as useful as an Andy Dyer IQ test.

Eek! It's a massive hairy dangly-from-the-ceiling-and-gobbing-out-missiles thing. And there's me with no flippin' weaponry!

because if you die at any point all your power-ups are taken away from you!

At the end of each section you have to defeat a giant enemy ship or structure (frequently more than one!), and when you defeat the fifth one you've won. Simple as that. You wish...

The main 'competition' in this field is Game Boy R-Type (a great game which scored 86% in our first issue), but Nemesis walks all over it. It isn't as pretty as R-Type, but in terms of pure blasting gameplay it's miles ahead. You get more variation, more scope for tactics (such as choice of power-up), but most importantly of all you get a much tougher challenge.

Some players can finish R-Type in a couple of days on Hard level, but even on the easier of Nemesis's two settings you'll be plugging away for ages before you get to the end. Amateur blasters can also take advantage of the set-up screen which allows you to practice on all the levels



BADDIES

Better to have an exact copy of the coin-op instead of the new levels. Death results in the loss of all your power-ups, which is always a pain



Ah! That's more like it. I've got two 'options' and multiple bombs. Man, I'm harder than an egg which has been boiled for six months, put in deep freeze and coated with nail varnish. That's hard!

'Ooh look! Bubbles' (Ooh look – a stupid stinge bag who's about to get mashed into atoms by photon spheres – Andy).

and give yourself up to 99 lives. Of course, if you want to see the end sequence, you'll have to play it properly...

Although it changes a lot of the coin-op's features, Nemesis still manages to keep the feel of the original. While other shoot 'em ups may have better graphics or more levels or whatever, nothing so far has managed to pull off the arcade gameplay balance or sheer playability of this ultra-sexy blaster. The bottom line is simple – if you've got a Game Boy, you've got to have Nemesis. **STEVE**



TOTAL!

Looks

Very pretty indeed with loads of detail, although perhaps just a tiny bit fiddly

Sounds

Great reproduction of the coin-op sonics, with fabby tunes and zappy FX

Gameplay

More fun than R-Type and a lot more challenging too. A classic blaster!

Life span

The second difficulty level is hard enough to keep you going for weeks

Shoot 'em up fans will be playing this one forever. It's definitely the Game Boy's best blasting action with the fastest action and meatiest power-ups!



Final rating
92
Percent

TOTAL RECALL

The definitive guide to Nintendo games (and what we think of them)

Picture it: Saturday afternoon. You're just about to buy a new game pak, but can't remember which ones got the best rating. Horrors! Well, to save you the despair of copping a Bad One, here's a run-down of all the games reviewed so far in TOTAL. Month by month this will build up into, well, a pretty big list!

NES



This is where we list all the games we've played plus a rating thingy. Andy tried to list them in alphabetical order, um, so they're not. Sorry, but he's a thick, dweebous-thickoid and has been severely bruised as punishment!

- ★ Utterly gimpoid
- ★★ Flongmatic
- ★★★ Average schmaverage
- ★★★★ Pretty dudacious!
- ★★★★★ Fab-o-brill!

Super Mario Bros 3
Nintendo
1-2 players £40



The greatest, the ultimate, the champ, la crème de la crème, la piece de resistance the, err, chicken vol-au-vent (!?) of video games. Quite simply, this is the most stunning platform game your NES (or any other console for that matter) will ever, ever have the honour of running. The Mario Brothers are the guys who put the 'great' into 'Lordy, this Nintendo system is blinking great'. So if you only have one NES game, you'd better make it this one. Buy SMB3 NOW!

★★★★★

Solar Jetman - Hunt For The Golden Warship
Nintendo/Rare
1 player £30



Boldly go where no man's gone before and explore 12 huge levels of alien-blasting, power up-collecting, jet pack-thrusting action. A technical masterpiece, Solar Jetman features graphics you could frame, playability you could sell in bottles and a soundtrack you could play on your Walkman. Shooting explore 'em ups don't come much better. In fact, they probably don't come any better.

★★★★★

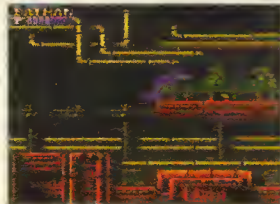
WWF Wrestle Mania Challenge
LJN Ltd/Rare
1-2 players £35



Are you a Hulk Hogan fan? Then you may think this is for you, but wait a second – underneath, this game's a real lightweight. It's too easy, repetitive and graphically tame. Initially you may think it's fun, but you'll be lucky if you get more than a day's entertainment. To conclude? WWF is to wrestling what Thicky Dyer is to Mastermind. 'Nuff said.

★★

Batman
Sunsoft
1 player £40



Grab your sister's tights and let's go. Gotham City needs de-Jokering and you're the man for the job. There are five massive levels to this tough platform game, with over 15 different baddies to batter and loads to discover as Batman walks, jumps and shoots smoothly past beautiful backgrounds. Unoriginal, but a real tough challenge.

★★★★

The Simpsons - Bart Vs The Space Mutants
Acclaim,
1 player, £40



You play Bart Simpson on a frantic skateboard-propelled mission to foil the Space Mutants. Bart must solve puzzles to collect all the everyday objects from five levels of horizontally-scrolling suburbia. There's sampled speech, groovy music and lots of humour. But, it's very tough and there's no password system. One for the pro's.

★★★★

Captain Skyhawk
Nintendo/Rare
1 player £25



Mindless, violent, uncaring – and loads of fun. Super-smooth graphics and adrenaline-inducing action combine to make Captain Skyhawk a superb all-round blast 'em up. Each mission features three varied stages, with the chance to soup-up your plane's weaponry at the end. Simple, but a great tension-reliever.

★★★★

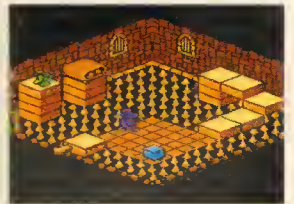
Goal!
Jaleco
1-2 players £40



This is soccer all right, but set in America. And if this game is anything to go by it's easy to see why the yanks are so pathetic at the game. Lousy graphics, abysmal sound effects, slow action, confusing gameplay – Goal! is unrealistic and very (very!) frustrating. Deserves the red card.

★★

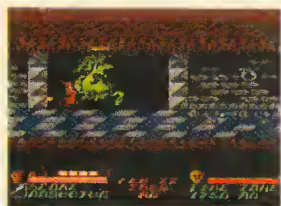
Solstice
Nintendo/Software Creations
1 player £30



Gob-smacking graphics and dreamy animation combine to create a fantasy 3D world for you to explore. Over 250 different rooms (Blimey!) await the attention of your heroic character, Shadax. Use potions to cast spells, move the scenery and collect special items – are you brave enough to rescue the princess? Are you hard enough to defeat the evil monsters? No? Never mind. Solstice is highly playable anyway and just oozes class.

★★★★★

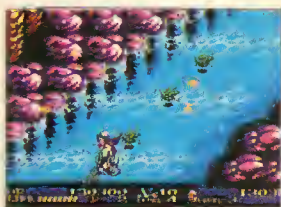
Time Lord
Milton Bradley/Rare
1 player £35



Medieval England, the Wild West, a Caribbean Pirate Ship, World War II and 2999AD – five levels of puzzle-solving, time-travelling tedium. Time Lord has some great ideas, as our hero has to collect cunningly hidden orbs, but sloppy programming lets the show down. Frustrating and unimaginative.

★★

Isolated Warrior
Nintendo/Vap Inc.
1 player £35



Spooky alien graphics and more power-ups and add-ons than Kwik-Fit give this 3D-ish shoot 'em up bags of atmosphere. A long, tough challenge lies ahead, as you try and clear planet Pan of alien invaders. The huge levels tend to drag on a bit, and the visuals get a bit flickery at times, but it's fast, furious, fun and, erm... Lots of other words beginning with F.

★★★★

Digger T. Rock – The Legend Of The Lost City
Milton Bradley/Rare
1 player £35



Digger's on the trail of buried treasure. He can dig, use dynamite to blast away walls, hurl rocks at baddies and climb ladders. The game is smoothly presented, with colourful graphics and some slick animation. There's also a lot to explore and discover, but it's dull! The levels are too big and it's frustrating and annoying.

★★★

Top Gun – The Second Mission
Konami
1-2 players £40



Do you feel the need, the need for speed? Well you'll soon feel the need for a quick lie down. Top Gun throws you into the hot seat of a F-14 Tomcat for a tough (very tough) flight into enemy territory. Amazingly fast, stomach-churning visuals but, unfortunately, only slightly less difficult than underwater pole-vaulting.

★★★

Battle Of Olympus
Nintendo/Imagineer
1 player £30



If you think the idea of adventure games sounds boring, then think again, buddy. Here's a truly engrossing, highly playable quest that offers terrific value for money. Slice 'n' dice action breaks up the adventuring, and there's loads to discover. Pretty graphics and an enthralling game world. Lovely!

★★★★★

Defender Of The Crown
Palcom/Konami
1 player £40



Dust off the old grey matter, it's brain-ache time again... Or is it? The year is 1149AD and the King has cashed in his chips. You play one of six knights on a quest to become the new monarch. Raise armies, then use your cunning and skill to decide who to attack first. Strategy games can be brill, but this one doesn't quite have enough to cut the mustard. A little too easy.

★★★

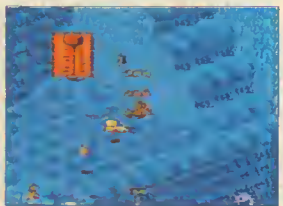
Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Super Off Road
Nintendo/Trade West
1-4 players £25



Eight different dirt-tracks await you and up to three of your chums for a day of off-road racing. You view the tracks from above (like in Super Sprint) as you make mincemeat of your opponents. Yes, it's far too easy – so either play it with your friends (great fun!) or give it a miss.

★★★

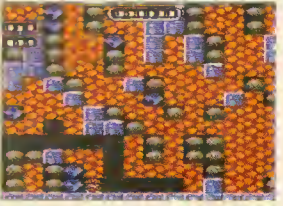
Snake, Rattle N Roll
Nintendo/Rare
1-2 players £25



A cracking 3D, scrolly collect 'em up-type game with two slithery snakes, Rattle and Roll. Simultaneous two-player action is the real hook, as the dynamic duo explore 11 levels of the prettiest graphics you ever did see together. Eat Nibbley Pibbles (small spherical creatures) to make the snakes grow as you try to get heavy enough to open the exit door on each level. There are groovesome tunes and bags to discover, so if you play your NES with a chum, club together and treat yourselves. It's a blinkin' stunner.

★★★★★

Boulder Dash
First Star Software
1-2 players £25



Once the hero of computer games, Rockford's now back on your NES. 24 levels of brain-busting action await, as you collect diamonds from underground caverns without getting squished by falling boulders. The puzzles start off

Thicky! Get back on your own pages! I told you I was doing the NES reviews – you're doing the Game Boy ones. Next page, flongy, next page!



so easy, even your senile old Granny could play without having a seizure. But before long, it gets tough enough to make would-be Einsteins break down in a fit of uncontrollable sobbing. It's addictive, challenging and looks better than ever – a classic! (Sigh, if only Misery Guts Jarratt improved with age...)

★★★★★

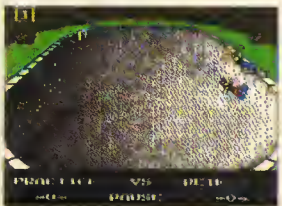
Gauntlet II
Mindscape
1-4 players £40



Digitised speech, zillions of monsters, ultra-smooth scrolling and simultaneous four-player baddie-blasting action. As near to a perfect arcade-conversion as your NES will see. Descend through the dungeons picking up potions, fighting dragons, and playing a childish game of tag. If you don't know what we're on about buy it and see. You won't be disappointed. With over 100 levels, this is a real gem – especially with friends.

★★★★★

Skate Or Die
Palcom/Konami
1-2 players £25

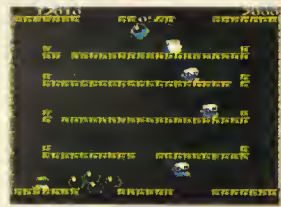


You can skate, you can die or there is one other choice – do

neither and spend your money on something else. The game consists of five sub-games or events, none of which are particularly inspiring while some really stink. You can skate downhill against the clock (yawn), batter another skate boarder with a canoe paddle (slump), try doing fancy freestyle moves in mid air (snooze), jump as high as you can from a half pipe (zzzz) or race through an alley way against an opponent (snore). Mediocre graphics and awkward controls just make things worse. Skate Or Die? Hello, Death!

★★

Bubble Bobble
Taito
1-2 players £25



This age-old classic has 226 (toounnerdantwennysicks!) levels of the most frantic, addictive platform action that your NES can chuck at you. A simultaneous two-player option is the icing on the cake of this perfect arcade-to-NES conversion, as Bub and Bob (two dragons with a talent for bubble-blowing) bounce their way through swarm after swarm of the cutesy baddies. It's a bit easy to finish because of unlimited continue options, but it's still great fun for two players to come back to time after time after time. One of Steve's favourite games of all time so it can't be bad.

★★★★



Well, that's the NES games covered, but what about everyone's favourite handheld? We played 20 Game Boy titles in issue one, and just in case you missed them (or simply can't remember) here's the low-down. As with the NES, this list will grow bigger each month, acting as a complete guide for Game Boy gamers!

GAME BOY



- ★ Dweeb-fodder
- ★★ Twonky
- ★★★ Okey-dokey
- ★★★★ Fairly groovesome
- ★★★★★ Brill-o-fab!

And NOW! Ladies and gennelmun! Er, here is, for your delecertessenashun um, all, YES! ALL the Game Boy reviews. (Was that intro good enough Steve?)

F-1 Race
Nintendo
1-4 players (with Four Player Adapter) £30



Get your motor running and carry on where Nigel Mansell left off. Loads of courses, the possibility of four-player link up and fast graphics make this a real cracker. Actually, 'fast' is an understatement – the action is practically supersonic! You can almost see smoke billowing from your Game Boy as you engage a turbo. A real speed demon!

★★★★★

Robocop
Ocean
1 player £25



Robocop may be well 'ard, but he's a bit of a snail when it comes to actually moving around. As his clunky metallic frame struts around the streets

of Detroit, you find yourself worrying not about the vast array of baddies, but of grinding to an undignified halt. Unlike in the movies, the bullets don't just bounce off, so it's annoying when your tin copper strolls around at a leisurely pace. Having said that, Robocop is entertaining enough and lays down a challenge tougher than Robo's metallic skin.

★★★

Turtles - Fall Of The Foot Clan
Konami
1 player £25



Glorious looking game with BIG sprites that move really well. Luckily for Turtle fans (both of us) there's a cracking beat 'em up game underneath, too. This time you guide the awesome foursome on a smooth-scrolling mission to save April (again!). Each Turtle has two forms of attack and can perform amazing somersaults! An options screen allows you to play any level which spoils the element of discovery, but play it 'properly' and you'll be hooked.

★★★★★

R-Type
Nintendo/Irem
1 player £20



One of the all-time classic shoot 'em ups puts you in the unenviable space-shoes of a solo fighter, sent to sort out the evil Bydo empire. Blast the aliens and keep collecting the power-ups – before long your ship will be porkier than Sainsbury's bacon counter. Fantastic graphics with a tried 'n' trusted game design.

Nothing new, but still superb!

★★★★

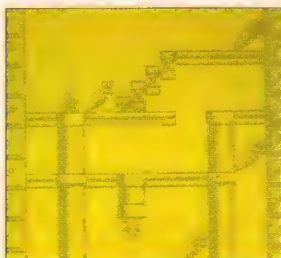
Side Pocket
Data East
1-2 players £25



It's a pool simulation game alright, but it never actually lets you play pool. Hmm... Instead, it's more of a puzzler – setting ball-potting challenges with time limits and things. Two-player link-up is possible, and helps things no end. But as it stands, this isn't really pool – more of a puddle, really.

★★★

Bugs Bunny
Kemco
1 player £20

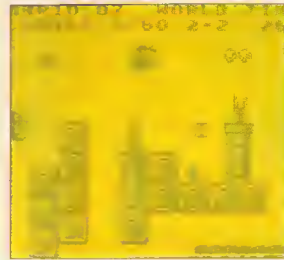


Honey Bunny (Bugs's gal) is being held prisoner, so Bugs must collect all the carrots scat-

tered across over 80 levels in order to rescue her. (Yes, I know it doesn't make sense but we'll carry on.) The graphics are fine, but the game is dull. Sorry Bugs, come back when you're in a better game.

★★

Super Mario Land
Nintendo
1 player £20

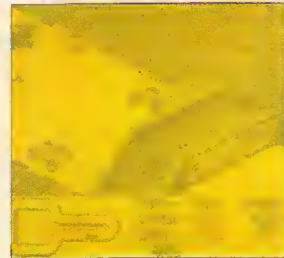


For 'Mario' read 'Midas' – it seems like everything he touches turns to gold! And this game pak is no exception.

Super Mario Land is a cracking play, with all the secrets, hidden goodies, playability and sheer class of its full-size NES counterparts. There are also a few new twists introduced, in the shape of scrolling shooty sections and a bonus game. If you've got a Game Boy, then buy this superb platform game. And that's an order.

★★★★★

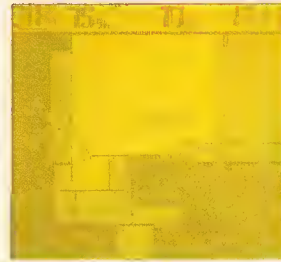
Super RC Pro-Am
Nintendo/Rare
1-4 players £25



Let's get this straight: this game simulates, simulated racing. Yes? Yes. For a change you're in remote control of an off-road buggy, up against three of your buddies as you burn around huge dirt-tracks. The action is fast and furious, as your highly-manoeuverable car zips its frantic (but smooth) course around bends, under bridges and over jumps. Great for four players, but you do get a bit tired of seeing the same old tracks in the one-player mode.

★★★★

Qix
Nintendo
1-2 players £20



Only SJ can remember this steam-operated coin-op from his youth, but he tells us that this Game Boy version is a faithful reproduction of the original. An inventive reaction-puzzler, you must employ the old braincells in attempt to guide a trail-blazing ship-thing around – filling up the screen as it goes. Weird, but well worth a look.

★★★★

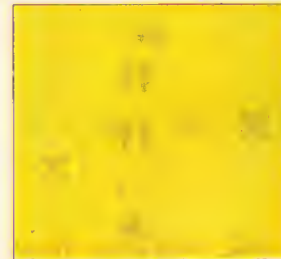
Revenge Of The Gator
HAL Laboratory Inc.
1-2 players £20



Pinball wizards won't find a better simulation than this. Ultra-smooth graphics and a whole arcade's worth of flippers and features crammed onto one four-screen 'table'. This makes an excellent Game Boy game, and although it may get a tad repetitive, pinball fans will love it.

★★★★★

Solar Striker
Nintendo
1 player £20



Top-to-bottom shoot 'em ups scrollers don't come much

more basic than this, but Solar Striker is still good fun. The graphics may look as if they've been scraped off a prehistoric cave, but don't be fooled. Under the sad, shambling visuals lurks a canny beast that will test you to the limits, with loads of aliens to blast and one or two guardians to put the wind up. Give it a whirl.

★★★

Batman

Sunsoft
1 player £25



Old Bruce Wayne must be the only man who can strut down the street in a pair of rubber underpants and *still* look 'ard. And 'ardness is what's needed here, as this game is a straightforward platform jump 'n' shoot 'em up requiring quick reflexes and a fast trigger finger. A sort of Super Mario Land, with latex. The stereo soundtrack is well worth a mention, as are the visuals. They may be small, but are beautifully detailed, complementing a thoroughly playable and classy game.

★★★★

Golf

Nintendo
1-2 players £20



Everyone likes to play a round now and again, and Golf contains no fewer than 36 holes to negotiate. Every one is beautifully drawn, and they're all very challenging! Everything you could ask for is here, including a two-player link-up option and a brilliant battery back-up so you can stop for tee (groan). Golf is an essential purchase for fans of the sport, and an excellent bargaining tool for anyone trying to talk their Dad into buying a Game Boy. Why? 'Cos he'll love it, that's why!

★★★★★

Tennis

Nintendo
1-2 players £20



If you enjoy tennis then this is the game pak for you. Control is just superb with a range of shots all made with a flick of the Joypad. Faultless gameplay, practical graphics and two-player link up make this a game you'll play and play until you've beaten all four difficulty settings. What's more, we're reliably informed that Stefan Edberg is a Game Boy Tennis addict. What other recommendation do you need?

★★★★★

Kwirk

Acclaim
1-2 players £20



Tomato ketchup fans, this is the game you've been waiting for! Guide Kwirk, a small (but perfectly formed) tomato to the exit in a series of simple, but increasingly-complicated mazes. Try to avoid getting trapped as you push blocks out of the way to clear your route. There are two game styles, two different graphic modes and a stupidly jolly soundtrack. A highly challenging puzzle game which will keep you battling away for hours.

★★★★★

Dr Mario

Nintendo
1-2 players £20



Forget the Super Mario connection – he's only here in name alone. This is a Tetris

clone in which a white-coated, stethoscope-wielding Mario throws tablets into a jar full of germs. You have to line up the different colours (well, shades of grey) with the colour-coded germs in order to destroy them. It's quite entertaining at first, but as the levels (and there are 60) get harder, they just gets more and more tedious to complete. It almost manages to capture the magic of the Russian block-tumbler, but it just doesn't have the long-term playability.

★★★

Castlevania Adventure

Konami
1 player £25



Garlic, crucifixes, wooden stakes and whip-happy trigger-fingers at the ready folks, it's vampire-hunting time! Simon Belmont returns to his old hunting ground in this mini remake of the classic Castlevania games of the NES. Gorgeous graphics and sprite animation coupled to detailed backdrops and inventive character design make this a visual treat. And just to make sure your ears don't get jealous, the sounds are superb too! A lack of restart points makes Simon's quest a frustrating challenge, but this is still high in the hack 'em up stakes. (Stakes? Geddit? oh, suit yourselves.)

★★★★

Nintendo World Cup

Nintendo
1-2 players £20



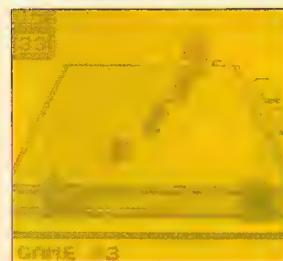
Er, Gazza may be no oil painting, but these footy players look *really* weird. For starters, the England line-up resembles a hippo's XI. And the opposition are just as bad, fielding a team of Clive Andersons! This wouldn't be so

bad but they make Thicky look like Magnus Magnussosnsn – intelligent they are not. Even the pitches (complete with rocks and clumps of grass to trip over) lead you to the conclusion that this is more odd-ball than football. Even with 12 teams to compete against there's no long-term challenge. Real footy fans should try Kick Off instead.

★★★

King Of The Zoo

Nintendo
1-2 players £20



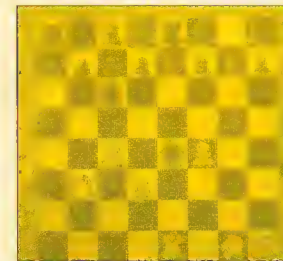
It's a duel to the death when the inmates of the zoo slug it out across a table top! To beat their furry friends, the animals hurl balls at each other, hoping to stun the enemy long enough to get all five balls to the other side before the timer runs out. This wacky ball-rolling bash 'em up is an entertaining little romp with cute looks (hilariously animated) and jolly sounds. It all seems straightforward but

the high playability level is bound to lead to sleepless nights! If only the two-player link-up option was a bit better.

★★★★

The Chess Master

Software Toolworks
1-2 players £20



If you enjoy the odd game of chess, then this is the opponent you've always wanted. He's polite, well-spoken (literally!) and plays a mean game. Well, several mean games. In fact, there's almost nothing more you could want from a chess game. It's hard to think of an option that's missing – you can change the board set-up, alter the graphic style and fiddle with the difficulty setting. You can even get the game to teach you how to play! If you don't enjoy chess, this won't change your mind, but it's great for chess addicts – and it's cheaper than a lot of the chess computers you can buy, too!

★★★★★

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We want **TOTAL! RECALL** to be as comprehensive as possible, so why not tell us what you think of old games (NES or game Boy) that we haven't reviewed yet? Tell us in about a hundred words what you think of the game and how many stars it's worth. We'll average all the marks out and put them in – that way you help other Nintendo players to steer clear of carts that aren't much cop!

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Heck no! It's full of NES and Game Boy reviews - and some people think it's even funnier than this one!



Gosh, everyone loves our first issue! So you wouldn't want to miss out on all the fun would you?



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TOTAL!

WHAT A BORE!

RELAX!

Now you've hacked through all the rubbish in issue two (I'm sure it's getting worse and it's not as funny as it used to be).

YAWN!

As you realise it's going to take the useless dweebs on **TOTAL** at least another month to get the next issue out onto the shelves.

SNORE!

When you accidentally read one of the 'other' console mags in the dentist's waiting room (dreadful load of old drivel).

SNOOZE!

When those same mags churn out yet another feature on a game that won't be available for three more centuries.

HAVE NIGHTMARES!

Now you've experienced the appallingly low level of humour in issue two of **TOTAL**.



Buy the next issue readers or the poor helpless dweeb gets it! (I still haven't worked out how the idiot got up there in the first place!)

NEXT MONTH!

Mmm, another one eh? Tricky. How about some spiffy NES reviews of: Smash TV, Captain Planet, Mission Impossible, Kick Off and Star Wars (hopefully). All right, calm down all you Game Boy owners, you'll be getting reviews on this little lot: Paperboy, Gauntlet II, Spider Man, Radar Mission and loads more.

FEATURES

We'll be bringing you all the hot Nintendo news from the CES show in Las Vegas - the BIG show for console gamers. And closer to home, we'll tell you what's good and what's not about all the latest joypads, joysticks and controllers for your NES.

TOTAL TACTIX

Even more Super Mario Bros. 3 tips, in fact all the tips you'll ever need. And how do you fancy romping through R-Type on the Game Boy? We'll help you out. And as if that wasn't enough, expect to see stuff on Boulder Dash, Zelda, Princess Blobette and Robocop.

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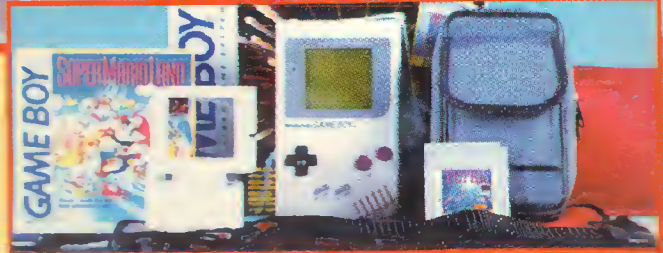
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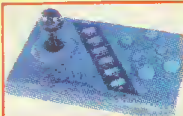
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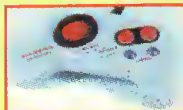
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